# Head in a Milk Bottle

VOL. 2, ISSUE 3



Robert "Bob" Thurmond Jr. (a.k.a. Rockin' Bob and "Slack") 1958 – 2011 Rest in peace.

## HIAMB: THE LOST ISSUE

If I remember correctly, this issue of Head in a Milk Bottle was nearing completion when Bob lost his job at the print shop where it was to be printed. This would have been sometime in early 2002. All of the files had been delivered to Bob for him to begin editing and assembling along with whatever he had written and prepared (including a Ded Bugs interview that's apparently lost forever) so that it could go to Bill for final layout. It was around that time that Bob had a falling out with his girlfriend and she kicked him out of the house. She bagged up all of his stuff in trash bags that took him months to sort

through. I launched the GaragePunk Forums online that same year and got really busy running that very active message board, and then in 2005, Bob was part of our team of podcast producers when Bill Streeter and I launched GaragePunk Pirate Radio (also known as the GaragePunk Podcast Network). Bob produced a really great show about B-movies that he called Snake Alley. There were nine episodes of that podcast, and you can find them right here on the Internet Archive along with HIAMB. So, being busy with that website, the podcasts, and also releasing ten digital "Best of the GaragePunk Hideout" compilations, and well, we sorta just forgot about the unfinished 'zine. He eventually tracked down the digital files for most everything you see here and got them to me in late 2010, and I promptly misplaced the disc for another decade after Bob suddenly passed away in March 2011. Fastforward to 2020 and, while going through some old backup discs that I had from my old office at work, I accidentally rediscovered all of those old files. Cool!



With those in hand, I started working on putting everything together in some sort of format where the content could be read and preserved for the future. And that's what we have here. So enjoy these words from 20 years ago. I'm sure Bob would be thrilled to know this stuff is finally seeing the light of day. We miss you, Bob.



The greatest distance walked by a person continuously balancing a milk bottle on their head is 130.3 km (80.96 miles) by Ashrita Furman of New York, USA, around Victory Field track in Forest Park, Queens, on April 22–23, 1998. It took him 23 hrs. 35 min. to complete the walk.

In closing, always remember, my friends... It's strange being in a distant land. I look up there's a hole in my hand, and it really hurts! Bend down, look at the curse. I'm not of this earth! Three knocks on my door. Come in, I don't care what for. I need blood, I can barely breathe. I'll buy your vacuum but you'll never leave 'cause I'LL PUT YOUR HEAD IN A MILK BOTTLE!! Bend down, look at the curse. I'm not of this earth! Step down, look at the curse. I'm not of this earth! -Angry Samoans

# R.I.P. Rob Thurmond of White Suburban Youth, GaragePunk's Snake Alley

Posted By Annie Zaleski in the Riverfront Times on Fri, Mar 11, 2011 at 10:00 am



Rob Thurmond, a member of the '80s hardcore punk band **White Suburban Youth** and the co-host of the one-time GaragePunk podcast Snake Alley, passed away earlier this month.

Thurmond was in WSY "from the spring of '85 until we broke up to form Ultraman in April of '86," says Tim Jamison, the vocalist of both bands. "He was an amazing bass player and really too good to have been playing with us, but he loved it for some reason."

WSY guitarist Rob Wagoner echoes Jamison's sentiments and calls him a "very underrated piece in the local punk rock puzzle. With White Suburban Youth, he gave us a musicality that we didn't have much of before, and I think that contribution carried on to what we did with Ultraman."

With a friend named Jim Agnew, Thurmond also wrote and drew artwork for an '80s punk 'zine called *Head in a Milk Bottle*. "His artwork was very distinctive," recalls Jamison. "There was no mistaking something that he drew for anyone else."

Thurmond later reactivated *Bottle* around the turn of the century and published two more issues. **GaragePunk.com founder Jeff Kopp**, a.k.a. Kopper, was the "content coordinator" of the 'zine then. The two men met via Kopper's radio show, the **Wayback Machine**.

"He'd call me up on KDHX during my radio show and talk about music and cars," **Kopper recalled in a blogpost**. "In addition to punk/rock 'n' roll, baseball and B-movies, he was a cheap guitar aficionado and a

big fan of muscle cars, and had an old GTO at the time. I'll never forget the first time he called me at the station; he was telling me about his car and then he said, 'Hang on,' hung the phone outside the window, ran out to the driveway and revved the engine for me so I could hear it. That was how I first came to know Bob."

Thurmond later produced a podcast called Snake Alley from August 2005 thru March 2007, and it was "one of the most entertaining podcasts on the early days of **GaragePunk.com Pirate Radio**," Kopper notes.

Wagoner says that Thurmond had become "world-weary" and "had dealt with some pretty harsh setbacks" in recent times. However, he had channeled the passion he always threw toward his music or drawing into helping "unwanted, damaged and abused Jack Russell Terriers and electric guitars," Wagoner says. "He got incredible pleasure from working with and cleaning up these outcasts and giving them the loving home they didn't have before. Recently, this was his world, and it's proof of how selfless a person he was."

Per family request, there isn't going to be a funeral. However, Wagoner says a memorial get-together for Thurmond's friends is in the works.

"He will be sorely missed," Wagoner says. "Usually when somebody is said to be one-of-a-kind it's a bit overstated, but in this case, it couldn't be more true."



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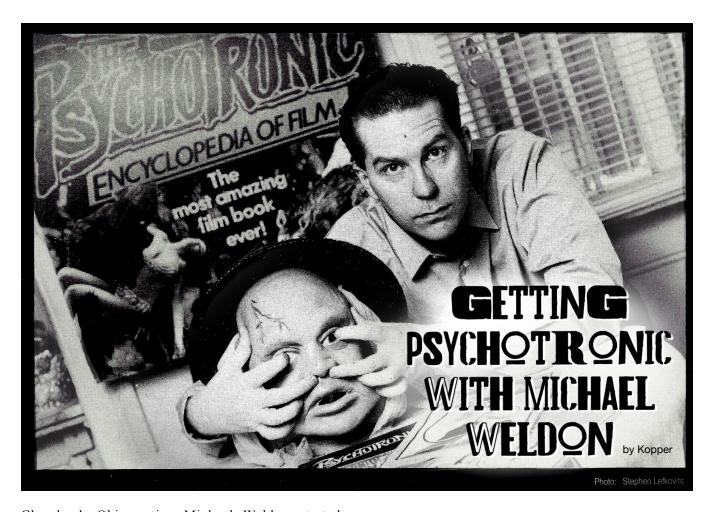


This is third and FINAL issue of Head in a Milk Bottle.

This issue was never printed and, indeed, wasn't even finished in its current PDF form until March 2021 so that it could uploaded to the Internet Archive and thereby preserving its content indefinitely. Even though Head in a Milk Bottle is being retired now, I plan on using it as a springboard to start a new project called NOT OF THIS EARTH, an online

"webzine" and music podcast. So watch for that in the upcoming weeks/months. Please follow me on Twitter (@kopper) and Instagram (@theekopper) for updates. Stay sick!

Turn blue!



Cleveland, Ohio native Michael Weldon started Psychotronic magazine some 22 years ago as a handwritten underground TV Guide for B-movie freaks living in New York City's East Village neighborhood. A few years later it evolved into a book, The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film, then gave birth to a popular yearly calendar, and later the highly regarded Psychotronic Video magazine and The Psychotronic Video Guide. For awhile, Michael also ran the Psychotronic Boutique, a groovy little underground video store, in New York City. His Psychotronic Video magazine has been in print as a quarterly fanzine since 1989 for fans of Z-grade biker, scifi, horror, sexploitation, and beach movies, with each issue jam-packed with great interviews with cult-movie stars and directors, columns, DVD, music, book and fanzine reviews. and a plethora of short, well-researched and entertaining film reviews from the silent period all the way up through the new millennium.

Michael J. Weldon was born on January 17, 1952, in Cleveland, Ohio, and raised mostly in the west-side suburb of Lakewood, the birthplace of Wired Radio (Muzak). In the '20s, Cleveland was the 5th largest city in America and was well known for the many millionaires who lived there. "When I was a kid it was promoted as 'The Best Location in the Nation,' but soon became a prime target of jokes on national TV shows. When I left (in '79) it was bankrupt. I still think it's a great and unique place."

Michael enjoyed a fairly typical suburban American baby-boomer upbringing. "I got along with—and still get along with—my parents and my brothers. Nothing uniquely bad happened to my family, but over the years we were affected by the same things that affected everybody: the Cold War (complete with bomb drills at school), assassinations, riots, the mass arrival of drugs, shopping malls and McDonald's taking over. Our neighborhood was also pretty much ruined by I-90 cutting right through it. We grew up playing in the ruins of our former neighbors' homes. For years it looked like a (safe) war zone. Our WWII vet dad was a semi-professional magician from Oklahoma who had also worked as a ventriloquist and a hypnotist. That alone made our family different, I guess."

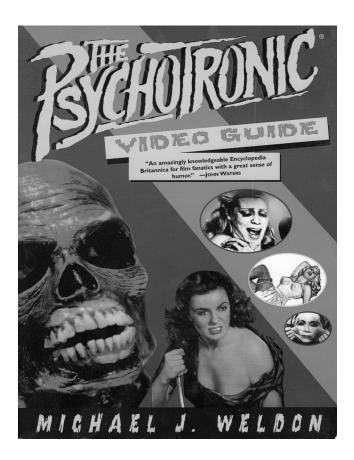
While he never had any big ambitions of being an actor or a rock'n'roll star, he did become fascinated with movies at an early age, and later had modest ambitions of playing in a local band, and in fact was in two. "I became fascinated with old movies as soon as my parents bought our first black and white TV set in the late '50s (most neighbors already had them). I was around Kindergarten age. Old ('30s and '40s) movies of all types were shown on TV every morning and afternoon on the local stations. My first favorites were haunted house and murder mystery movies, then I discovered the classic monsters."

3

The movies that really stick out in Michael's mind as being his favorites growing up were *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Captain Sinbad* (1963), and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) in theaters. Some of his favorites from TV included the classic H.G. Wells horror/sci-fi film *Island of Lost Souls* (1933) starring, among others, Bela Lugosi; *International House* (1933) with W.C. Fields; and *Peeping Tom* (1960).

When it came to TV shows, "My favorites were, at various times: Captain Kangaroo (when I was really young), local kids shows that featured depression-era comedy shorts (Our Gang, The Three Stooges), and cartoons, A Queen for a Day, Ernie Kovacs, midget wrestling, sci-fi/horror anthology shows (Alfred Hitchcock, Thriller, The Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits), music shows (Shindig!, Hullabaloo, Ed Sullivan Show, Where the Action Is, and the Cleveland-based Upbeat!), and spy shows ending with The Prisoner. I watched countless sitcoms but my all-time favorite was The Addams Family."

It didn't take long for Michael's fanaticism in movies to really festoon itself and become more than just a casual diversion. "I became serious about the movies I liked after the local Ghoulardi (Ernie Anderson) late night horror host show debuted in Cleveland (in '63), and I discovered Famous Monsters, Castle Of Frankenstein, and all the other monster movie magazines that were around then. I started wanting to know as much as possible about Boris,



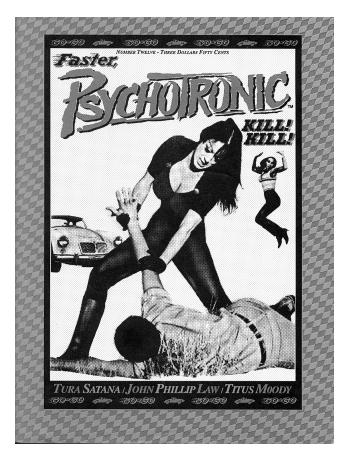


Bela, and Peter Lorre (and later, directors) and started scrapbooks of pictures and advertisements."

"Ghoulardi's original late Friday night show was Shock Theater. His Saturday afternoon movie show was Masterpiece Theater. His half-hour weekday afternoon show was Laurel, Ghoulardi and Hardy. We just called all of them "Ghoulardi." They were on Channel 8, WJW, the local CBS affiliate (it's Fox now). I've written many articles about Ghoulardi, the movies he showed, and the amazing music (rock, R&B, and jazz) heard on his shows in various issues of PV (Psychotronic Video magazine) and interviewed him for Fangoria. I don't know of any other local TV personality that had the intense and lasting cult appeal of Ghoulardi. His three main descendants (The Ghoul, Son of Ghoul, and Big Chuck) are all STILL on Cleveland-area TV! Ghoulardi's influence was so great in northeastern Ohio that kids blew up plastic models (and other things) with M-80s and said "Stay Sick" and "Turn Blue" to each other for years because of him. The Cramps were heavily influenced by Ghoulardi and Iggy and The Stooges were big fans of the Ghoul. I could write a book about him but somebody already did (Ghoulardi: Inside Cleveland TV's Wildest Ride by Tom Feran & R.D. Heldenfels, paperback, 1997). Ernie was also the comedy partner of actor Tim Conway (on local Cleveland TV and on comedy LPs), was the official announcer voice of the ABC network, and was the father of director Paul Thomas Anderson (Boogie Nights, Magnolia)."

Michael's love of obscure film wasn't shared by many of his friends growing up, which is interesting considering a lot of kids will get into what their friends are into. "I was pretty much on my own with my childhood movie obsessions but my mom also liked old monster movies and my dad had rare, old magic show posters on the wall of devils and decapitated heads. I didn't really know how many other Cleveland-area people were into the same movies I was, though, until I attended a sci-fi convention in 1966. It was fun, but by then I was more excited about music and bands than the *Star Trek* pilot that was premiered there."

Later on, there were a few things that influenced Michael to start reviewing movies, and to later publish



Psychotronic, but for the most part it was his own love of the genre, as well as punk rock, that caused him to want to start writing. "My capsule movie reviews were influenced by the ones in Castle of Frankenstein magazine from New York City, and probably by Leonard Maltin, who started writing his movie review books when he was still a teenager. When my first reviews were published (in Cleveland) we were all heavily influenced by the growing D.I.Y. punk 'zine scene. We sold Sniffin' Glue, Search and Destroy, NY Rocker, and many others in The Drome, the record store where I worked.

Regarding music and being a musician in the great early '70s Cleveland rock'n'roll scene, Michael says, "I've loved all types of pop music since I first heard top-40 radio, probably before we had a TV set. I was too little to experience the peak of original rock'n'roll (my parents were into typical MOR), but can clearly remember what was on the radio from about 1958 on. I liked novelty songs and instrumentals first, then was a fan of surf music, girl groups, early Motown, crossover R&B and country, and singers like Gene Pitney, Del Shannon, Dion, and Roy Orbison—pretty much whatever was good on the radio and there was a LOT. Late '50s and early '60s music was great but the British Invasion caused a major exciting shift away from solo acts and singing groups, and really was the reason why so many guys started playing guitars and forming local bands—all over the world. The first band I was in (The Water's Edge) was around 1966-'68. I played rhythm guitar (a black, solid-body Hagstrom) through a used Ampeg amp with a torn speaker. It was an exciting time because local garage bands could actually hope to maybe have a local—and sometimes national!—hit, and guitar effects (feedback, distortion, echo, wah-wah, etc.) were being discovered and accepted. The band I was in played all covers of hits, B-sides and LP cuts by Love, the Blues Magoos, the Byrds, the Who, and the Yardbirds, plus the great songs every band played then ("Louie Louie," "Hey Joe," "Gloria," "Wipeout," etc.). There were two older guys in the band, which was a good thing if you wanted to learn new things. The singer owned Freak Out! by the Mothers Of Invention (we never attempted to play any of that!) and the bass player owned LPs by all the bands I just mentioned. We weren't organized enough or wealthy enough to make any records, though. This was before any of us had tried any drugs (although one guy sniffed glue) and I hadn't even had a beer yet. Two band members later became junkies. I don't know if either one is still alive.

"As far as favorite artists go, I still love the Beatles and the Stones but also Howlin' Wolf, the Shadows, Link Wray, Phil Ochs, the Kinks, the Pretty Things, Captain Beefheart, Thirteenth Floor Elevators, the Flamin' Groovies, the Stooges, Can, Motörhead, the Cramps, the Avengers, the Saints, and Wire, to name just a few."

During his formative years in Cleveland, Michael held quite a few jobs. "I worked in restaurants for too long, then at the Record Rendezvous store in Cleveland's Public Square. Leo Mintz, the owner of this small local chain of stores had been a friend of Alan Freed. Mintz sponsored the famous early '50s *Moondog Matinee* show and has been credited with convincing Alan Freed to play R&B music on the radio for white kids and call it rock'n'roll. Mintz also sponsored Cleveland's wildest-by-far DJ, The Mad Daddy. After 'The Vous,' I worked at Northern Records, a major regional one-stop distributor, and then the Drome."



The Mirrors

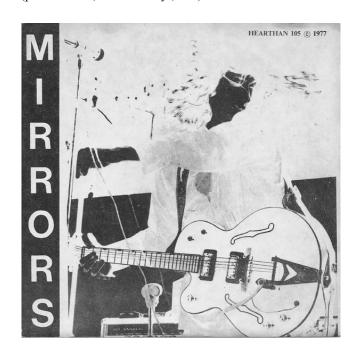
In the late 1960s and into the early '70s, Michael got to know quite a few people involved with the early punk scene in Cleveland, and he also played drums for a band called the Mirrors, who would later evolve into the Styrenes. "I only played drums because nobody else wanted to and there was a cheap, used set around. I never played drums before or after the Mirrors. By the early '70s, most Cleveland-area bands were strictly cover bands and they tended to cover whatever was the most popular at the time. Any "scene" that had existed with the Choir, the Baskerville Hounds, and the Outsiders was long gone and the days of the local-based, more experimental bands (James Gang, Glass Harp, Damnation of Adam Blessing, etc.) was over, too. I knew and hung out with all the members of the Electric Eels and some of the Mirrors since high school. Founding Mirrors members Jamie Klimek and Jim Crook were older. When I was still in school, Jim was fighting in Nam, which was where we all expected to end up. I first met the late Rocket From the Tombs and Pere Ubu founder Peter Laughner when I was still in school (late '60s) because his bass player then was my locker partner. The Mirrors later played on bills with the Eels and Rocket, and I later worked at the Drome record store with (Ubu frontman) David Thomas. He quit when Ubu was signed, which was about the time I met the Pagans, whose records were on Drome Records. Other people I knew, had worked with in record stores, or had at least met, ended up in bands in Manhattan (the Cramps, Dead Boys, Teenage Jesus and The Jerks, DNA, Feelies, Zantees, Bush Tetras, etc.).

"I knew the guys in the Electric Eels the best since we all went to Lakewood High. I went to the Atlantic City Pop Festival (featuring Dr. John, Arthur Brown, Little Richard, Lothar and the Hand People, Tim Buckley, and others) with Brian McMahon (Eels) and Dave. I was in a high school movie that Paul Marotta (founding member of the Electric Eels and infamous Cleveland studio musician and producer/engineer who also worked with the Pagans, Pere

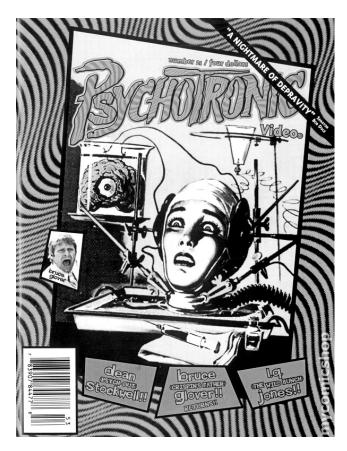
Ubu, and the Styrenes) made—something about sex under a table during dinner and shooting drugs. I shared apartments with Dave (had to throw him out) and Brian. Brian and I spent the night in jail after partying at Peter Laughner's and I was threatened with guns in a working-class bar because of John Morton's (Eels) and Brian's confrontational antics. After the drummer for Rocket From the Tombs stole equipment from the Eels, I went with John and Nick Knox (Eels drummer, later of the Cramps) who were planning to beat him up, but we never found him. Other memories are of going to see bands like the Stooges, the New York Dolls, Captain Beefheart, Alice Cooper, and Sun Ra with various Eels and best of all, seeing the looks on people's faces when the Eels played live."

Even though he was spending a lot of his time running around with these notorious Cleveland punks, Michael was still very much interested in B-movies. "I got into 'underground' films going to weekly midnight shows at a local (Lakewood) theater during the late '60s. They showed features and shorts of all descriptions—usually featuring sex, drugs, and politics that had been banned from mainstream movies. The films ranged from West Coast hippie dreams to Warhol/New York stark reality. I started writing about movies in school, pretty much for myself. Shortly after I went to work at the Drome record store (in '77), Jim Ellis, David Thomas, and store owner John Thompson (a.k.a. Johnny Dromette) started *Cle* magazine and I wrote a column of movie reviews being shown on local Cleveland TV.

"By '79, the exciting new 'punk' scene had already devolved into 'new wave' and cocaine was becoming a serious problem for many people. There were still great new bands, but the emphasis was on stupid gimmicks (picture discs, colored vinyl, etc.). Cleveland had defaulted



and many people I knew had already moved to NYC. The Drome had been thrown out of its Cleveland Heights location and had moved to Lakewood (a mistake). The local radio stations refused to play our commercials if they had any music that sounded like 'punk' (the same sounds now used on countless commercials selling everything). Everybody seemed depressed by the state of the incredibly shrinking city of Cleveland, Jonestown, and Three Mile Island. We put on a show in '79 at the Drome featuring the pre-LP B-52s and tried showing *Eraserhead* as a midnight movie. The number of people at these shows numbered in the tens. It was time for a major change, so I packed up a rented van and arrived at former Eel John Morton's loft in Brooklyn on the 4th of July."



Eager to continue his movie critiques and do something productive with his time, Michael started *Psychotronic* as a weekly, xeroxed, hand-printed alternative NYC TV guide in 1980 shortly after moving into an East Village apartment and landing his first NYC job, which was with another excellent record store, now long gone—Record City on Broadway. "It just seemed like the thing to do. I hand-delivered copies every week to shops around lower Manhattan, then returned and tried to collect money. There were no ads. I had help and encouragement from *Village Voice* employees Akira Fitton (still with *PV*) and artist Sally Eckoff (my girlfriend at the time). Some others who

helped out in various ways included Charlie Beesley and Fred Brockman (both from Ohio), *Fangoria* editor Bob Martin, and Lester Bangs, who actually asked me if he could write movie reviews for *Psychotronic*."

Asked how he could afford to live in Manhattan on a record store clerk's salary, he says, "If you were lucky, apartments could be found in the Village for even cheaper than in Cleveland at the time. Many were rent stabilized or controlled. I met people in my building who were still paying under \$100 a month! After a while all of them either died or were bought (or scared) out of the building so the landlord could charge \$800, \$1,000 or whatever. I held on to mine for over 20 years. When I lived at 341 E. 9th St., tenants included a one-time member of the Holy Modal Rounders, a former Voidoid, an Irish female filmmaker whose main star was Lydia Lunch, and a resident biker/dealer who collected pulp novels."

It didn't take long for the weekly *Psychotronic* guide to attract some good local media attention. "After all, I was in New York City writing about 'trash culture'—it would have been amazing if I *hadn't* gotten any media coverage." This led to a deal at Random House/Ballantine to do a book of reviews. "I knew I couldn't devote enough time to a book then AND still grind out a weekly 'zine, so with mixed feelings I stopped publishing *Psychotronic* and used my advance money to live on for a while. When it was published (in '83), *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* got many great reviews, good publicity, and sold well and steadily. It has been reprinted many times and is still in print nearly 20 years later, which is unusual for any movie book."

Michael continued writing movie reviews, and thirteen years later published the second volume, this one being called *The Psychotronic Video Guide*. "It has done well too, but 1996 was not 1983 and, although St. Martin's is a 'cool' publisher, it's not Ballantine. I would love to write and assemble one Psychotronic book with everything from both earlier books (with corrections and additions) plus newer reviews. Since every company on the planet is busy being bought out or merging these days, I figure if I wait long enough, my former publishers will both be owned by the same multi-national conglomerate and there will be no more legal problems. I just hope that books are still being published by then!"

In 1989, Michael decided to take *Psychotronic* a step further and start a more or less "real" magazine again. "It just seemed like the thing to do at the time. I had recently been inspired by touring Europe with a package of psychotronic movies (which included *Dementia* (a.k.a. *Daughter of Horror*), *Robot Monster*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Night Tide*, and *Nabonga*), had met my future wife, Mi Hwa, and was tired of writing formula freelance reviews for video magazines. *Psychotronic Video* grew slowly and we have had to deal with the realities of the real world

'zine distribution system (they're all crooks), rising paper and postage costs, and the rush towards our current 'connected' world. I still love publishing a magazine but whenever anybody asks about starting their own 'zine, I tell them that unless they're independently wealthy and have spare time they'd have to be out of their mind to do it and expect to not lose money. We continue to sell enough issues and enough ads and subscriptions to hang on. Otherwise, as I said, you have to be out of your mind to do this for so many years without ANY financial backing and at the mercy of distributors.

"Fanzines peaked in popularity at some point in the '90s when there were books about them; Factsheet Five was around and there were more and better distributors to handle them. It now seems like they were on the way out even then. The Internet really is changing everything. Most of the distributors that didn't declare bankruptcy or were bought out changed all of their policies (on returns, percentage paid, and other matters) and made it even harder for indy 'zines to survive. The biggest distribution nightmare was when Fine Print of Texas went under owing money to all the 'zines they had carried."

Even though Michael now lives in Virginia, he says that PV is still printed in the NYC area. "We moved to the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 2000 after a series of memorable negative events both personal (we nearly died in a head-on collision in New Jersey) and well-known and newsworthy. 1999 was the year of the Y2K panic, The Woodstock disaster (we had first-hand reports) and Columbine. Locally, The Narrowsburg International Film Festival was part of a short-lived but book-worthy con orchestrated by a low-level wise guy from Brooklyn who had starred in an autobiographical shot-on-video movie called Wacking Cows. We had to escape from the huge Times Square Loews Theater in Manhattan on Easter during a wildingstyle riot at a showing of The Matrix. Our car was totaled by a guy talking on his cell phone. We spent New Year's Eve in Times Square and decided it was time for a change of scenery (and weather).

"I basically felt the same way I did in 1979 when I decided to leave Cleveland; things in general were getting dangerously out of hand and it seemed like something really awful was going to happen. Just after I moved to NYC, the Iran hostage crisis happened, Reagan and Bush were elected and Lennon was shot. Just after we moved totally out of New York (City and upstate), George W. was elected, the WTC (where we ate dinner on our wedding day) toppled and Joey Ramone and George Harrison died. Somehow we seem trapped in cycles as things devolve. Did I mention that Devo played live in the Drome?

"I first saw Devo in a small club in nearby Akron. Johnny Dromette got to be friends with Mark Mothersbaugh and their hard-working original manager (who they dumped after being signed). The Drome showed Devo's amazing



videos to open several Disasto shows (starring Pere Ubu, Suicide Commandos, Destroy All Monsters, Pagans, and others) and Devo played live for free in the store once, complete with Mark as Booji Boy in a playpen. I thought they were totally unique, funny, and disturbing. I remember hearing Mark talking to David Thomas about the future and goals of their still-unsigned bands, never imagining that both would last so long and do so well. Mothersbaugh had a homemade scrapbook illustrating all aspects of deevolution. That must have been the primer for the SubGenius Foundation."

Some of you fellow zine-makers reading this who may have encountered printing/publishing nightmares may be relieved to know it's not an uncommon thing, and has even happened with PV. "The most memorable production memory is when our new printer refused to print at the last possible moment because someone at the company was offended by a photo of a naked woman. We've been turned down by other printers because I refuse to censor things—at least not at their demand."

Michael and his wife decided to close up their Manhattan-based Psychotronic Boutique video store (which was recreated by almost-resident fan Quentin Tarantino in his movie *True Romance*) in 1993 when they bought a house in Sullivan County (upstate), which was surrounded by a farm with cows and overlooked the Delaware River. "We thought about having somebody else run our store so we could live in our house, but (wisely, I think) decided to close up. We had a good and profitable time running the Psychotronic store for a few years but we also had to put up with relentless shoplifters (including bored students, homeless people, junkies, and drag queens), 'anarchists' from Tomkins Square Park who smashed windows and glued our locks shut, gangster garbage collection

shakedowns, a psycho super, and New York's (Mayor) Dinkins-era general chaos. While we had our store, two neighboring restaurant owners were murdered, and a guy down the street was arrested for killing a ballerina and boiling her head. Our store was basically in storage for years until we moved to Virginia."

When flipping through the most recent issue of PV, I noticed he has "Legal Counsel" listed on the masthead for BOTH coasts. Michael told me there's a good reason for this. "I never thought of hiring a lawyer for anything until after the first book came out and I found out how many different ways you can be cheated and conned if you are doing something others would like to profit from. We have had to use lawyers to collect money, to work out convoluted publishing deals, and to stop several stores and an international corporation from blatantly misusing and abusing Psychotronic.



"While our NYC store was open, an existing local chain of video stores (that I was a member of) started putting the Psychotronic logo on their membership cards and above their own name outside their stores! When I calmly told the (immigrant) owner that this was unfair, uncool, and illegal, he started yelling 'This is America! I can do whatever I want!' He pointed at a truck going by and said 'I can call my store Coca-Cola if I want!' It took a lawyer to stop him. Then, some men from a very large international corporation came by and said 'We love what you're doing and we're planing a syndicated Psychotronic TV show. We'll hire you as a consultant but we're going to do it if you agree with us or not.' They had already shot a promo short (using our logo) for it and everything! A lawyer stopped them. After a while, whenever I'd hear the words 'fan,' 'synergy,' and 'business' at the same time, I'd know to call a lawyer."

When I asked him if he could recall some of his most memorable features that have been included in PV over the years, he recalls, "The most memorable people interviewed for PV for various reasons were David Carradine, Susan Tyrell, and Sammy Petrillo. I didn't interview them myself but dealt with all of them. Meeting Al Adamson shortly before he was murdered was memorable, too. Of the interviews I conducted myself, I have the best memories of Ernie (Ghoulardi) Anderson."

Michael says the people he has working on PV (most for no money) are a good combination of old friends and people who he's met or have contacted him with good ideas over the years. "I have assigned some interviews but others were just sent in out of the blue.

"The film industry has always been a mindless, greedy machine. It's amazing that any good and worthwhile movies are and were produced. Luckily I also enjoy watching mediocre and terrible movies. I hate paying top dollar to see a boring, mediocre movie, but love seeing a good one in a theater and I'll watch just about anything on tape or TV—it's part of my 'job.' Even the best directors usually only make a few really great movies. I've pretty much given up counting on any of them. For example, I like some films by the Coen brothers and Jim Jarmusch a lot, as well as ones by David Cronenberg and David Lynch -but not all of them." When asked if he thinks the Bmovie film industry might be drying up to the point where it might become increasingly more difficult to find subjects to cover in the pages of  $\overline{PV}$ , he says, "There will NEVER be a lack of interesting PV-type actors, directors, and musicians to interview, or releases to review."

And that, my friends, is good news indeed.

"Stay Sick."—Michael J. Weldon



### TOP TWENTY ALBUMS OF 2001

- 1. The Detroit Cobras Life, Love, and Leaving (Sympathy)
- 2. The Dirtbombs *Ultraglide in Black* (In The Red)
- 3. The Buff Medways This Is This (Vinyl Japan)
- 4. The Cripplers *One More for the Bad Guys* (Dionysus)
- 5. Clone Defects *Blood on Jupiter* (Tom Perkins)
- 6. White Stripes White Blood Cells (Sympathy)
- 7. The Lost Sounds *Memphis Is Dead* (Big Neck)
- 8. The Deadly Snakes I'm Not Your Soldier Anymore (In The Red)
- 9. Baby Woodrose Blows Your Mind! (Pan)
- 10. Les Sexareenos 14 Frenzied Shakers (Sympathy)
- 11. The Greenhornes S/T (Telstar)
- 12. The Hives Barely Legal (Gearhead)
- 13. Andre Williams Bait and Switch (Norton)
- 14. The Zodiac Killers Have a Blast (Rip Off)
- 15. Tomorrow's Caveman Today! (Chucklehead)
- 16. Mr. Airplane Man *Red Lite* (Sympathy)
- 17. Dan Melchior's Broke Review Heavy Dirt (In The Red)
- 18. Ded Bugs Planet of Blood (IBC Shadows)
- 19. Tyler Keith and The Preacher's Kids Romeo Hood (Louisiana Red Hot)
- 20. The Dictators D.F.F.D. (D.F.F.D.)

**Honorable Mentions:** Dexter Romweber - *Chased By Martians* (Manifesto), The Briefs - Hit After Hit (Dirtnap), Fugazi - *The Argument* (Dischord), and the Now Time Delegation - Watch for Today (In The Red)



# THE CLONE DEFECTS

by kopper



The Clone Defects are a fantastic, raw punk band from Detroit with a sound that hearkens back to the best of the NYC '70s Max's/CBGB's scene (think NY Dolls, Heartbreakers, Voidoids, etc.) who have been playing together now for almost four years. Back in late September they finally made it into town and played with The Spiders at the Way Out Club in south St. Louis. I actually interviewed the band before the gig, but the interview took place behind their van parked in the alley outside the club. The combination of the noisy city night air, boisterous laughter, trucks rumbling by, not to mention four mumbling band members (all talking at the same time, natch) made the interview impossible to transcribe. And, believe me, I tried. I sat at my desk for two nights straight, tape in the jam box, headphones on, volume up to 10, struggling to make anything out at all. In retrospect, it probably would have helped if I'd sat down to do the transcribing within a couple days of the interview, while the conversation and comments were still fresh in my grey matter, but like the procrastinating idiot that I am, I waited until fucking mid-January when it was all barely more than a distant, foggy memory. Memo to myself: Don't do interviews outside, transcribe them right away, and get a better tape recorder. So, after an attempted third day of wrestling with it, and getting nothing much more than line after line of broken comments and incomplete responses, I said "fuck it" and just decided to write a short piece on the band, maybe tell you what I know about 'em, include a few of their comments, summarize their history, and print some of the pics I took at the Way Out that night, because the band does deserve the exposure. They really did put on one helluva show that night last Fall, and the predictably small crowd gathered there to see it sure went home with a new (or at least revitalized) perspective on Detroit punk.

The Clone Defects are Timmy Vulgar (guitar and vocals), Wild Mid Wes (guitar), Chuck Fogg (bass), and "Fast" Eddie Alteslaven (drums). They were supposed to have played on this particular night with another great, raw garage punk band, The Guilty Pleasures, from Chicago, who would've been making their second trip to St. Louis after having previously played with The Vultures and Tomorrow's Caveman at the Creepy Crawl some months prior. Unfortunately for all of us, The Guilty Pleasures split up shortly before they were to make this gig. Supposedly (according to Timmy Vulgar), Jared the Guilty guitarist left the band because "it just wasn't working out. No



structure to the songs," because supposedly Chuck, the singer, just wasn't into it anymore. Matt, the drummer, is now playing with the Baseball Furies. Yes, it's unfortunate, but not entirely surprising. I mean, after all, how many bands of any quality actually last more than a couple of years, anyway? Ha... just ask Tim Warren at Crypt Records. One of the reasons he totally gave up on releasing music by new bands.

Anyway, The Clone Defects come from the over-saturated Detroit scene. Just how oversaturated is it? Well, consider a city about twice the same size as St. Louis (when you include Ann Arbor and Flint) with about ten times the amount of great rock'n'roll bands, ranging from the crudest, dumbest, drunk punk to raunchy garage rock and some of the smoothest soul and R&B you'll find anywhere, and you might begin to understand what it's like. But it's not all good, as the guys in the band will readily admit. For one thing, crime (and specifically, theft) is a pretty bad problem. They recently had all of their gear stolen from their practice space (all except the drum set, which supposedly the burglar couldn't figure out how to disassemble). They lost everything: guitars, amps, PA, the works. So they were playing

this show at the Way Out on borrowed equipment. Wes had his car stolen a week before the show, too, and Tim had had the tires stolen off of his bike. True, this could have happened anywhere (like \*cough cough\* St. Louis \*cough cough\*) and really shouldn't be held against its great scene. So what's the problem then? According to the guys in the band, everyone they know is already in bands (so much so, in fact, that are fewer and fewer "fans" left to support them all), and most, if not all, of those bands are quickly being snatched up by labels like Sympathy, Italy, Flying Bomb, In the Red, Get Hip... you name it. "It's gotten so that there aren't really any opening bands anymore!" says Tim. Everybody wants (and deserves) to headline. He says it's fun, though, and his favorite Detroit bands are The Go and The Piranhas.

A bit of history (but JUST a bit) would be that Timmy Vulgar used to be in a band called the Epileptix, in which he'd freak out on stage and cut himself up and stuff. Rumor has it the bass player wasn't even

conscious for a few of their shows. Punk rock! He told the story of meeting band mates Chuck and Wes for the first time: "I met Chuck at the VFW hall and he was starting up a skate gang called The Evil Old-Schoolers and we were gonna beat up new-school kids that were doing new tricks, and they were called The Urban Punks and they were a bunch of high-school punks. Then I met Wes. He came over for Mother's Day dinner and fell asleep on the couch next to my mother." The rest of the band - while this isn't their first band - don't really bring much of a rock'n'roll pedigree to the lineup, not that that matters, of course. These guys are young (early 20s) and fresh and full of all sorts of great defective qualities that make them one of the best new punk bands to emerge in years, and for an old fart like me it's really fucking refreshing to hear them play this



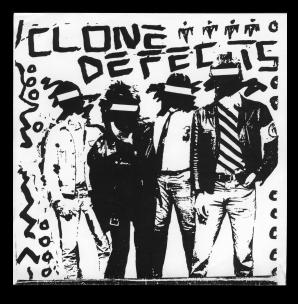
raucous noise. Their style? Well, if you leave out the obvious and all-too-familiar nods to the Stooges, Alice Cooper, the Stones, Flamin' Groovies, you're left with a big tip of the cap to such great Cle-punk bands as the Pagans and Electric Eels, as well as more modern groups like the Devil Dogs and Teengenerate. Other band faves include Sub Pop recording artists Vue as well as The Dirtbombs and Andy G. & The Roller Kings.

The defects started playing around 1998. Tom Perkins released their first single, "Bottled Woman" b/w "Cheetah Eyes." Italy Records then released the "Scissors Chop" single that same year. Italy co-released their "Lizard Boy EP" with Superior Sounds Records (Tim's brother's label) at the end of 2000. The first two singles were recorded in Jack White's living room, and Ben Blackwell from The Dirtbombs even appears on "Bottled Woman," and is responsible for the reverb crash you hear at the beginning of the song.

Their debut album, Blood on Jupiter, was recorded at Jim Diamond's all-analog Ghetto Recorders Studio in Detroit. Ben (now writing for HIAMB) told me a funny story recently about this session: "While doing overdubs for "Blood on Jupiter," Timmy was trying to get the whole band/brotherhood mentality across to the other guys, trying to psyche them up to do back-up vocals. Chuck, not caring in the least about it, says 'Fuck this, I'm gonna go get a blow job from a teenager.' Single-handedly, that has to be one of the best punk rock quotes ever."

The Defects are currently working on their next record which, rumor has it, is going to be released on In The Red Records. ITR head honcho Larry Hardy has taken quite a shine to the fucked up punk of Detroit by also sweettalking The Piranhas to do some recording for the label, and the two bands are hoping to tour together this summer. The Clone Defects will also be appearing on an upcoming Sub Pop tribute to Alice Cooper, as they tackle Cooper's classic "Is it My Body?" Apparently Sub Pop chose not to use Sonic Youth's version of the same song, released back in 1991, and chose instead to have The Clone Defects pound out a version of it, which in and of itself is quite a compliment if you ask me. So the band seems to be doing pretty well now, getting some good exposure, having nice things written about 'em in 'zines (I first read about 'em in Horizontal Action #7), touring once in a while and landing good shows throughout the Midwest, like this one at the



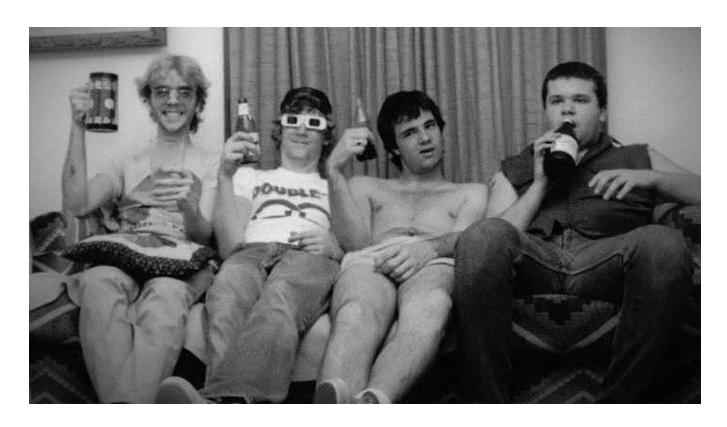




Way Out, and even doing a WFMU radio session. Let's just hope they don't follow in the footsteps of other great punk bands that have come and gone before them, like the Guilty Pleasures, and split up before we have another chance or two to see them kick ass live. For more information, or to order a copy of their CD, write to Tom Perkins Records, P.O. Box 970936, Ypsilanti, MI 48197.







## **The White Suburban Youth Story**

by Tim Jamison

White Suburban Youth, it was an adjective. A lot of hardcore bands wrote about all kinds of things we had no real experience with and guessed a lot of them didn't either so we didn't see the point in it, well, at least I didn't and I wrote the lyrics. We put "youth" in the name, as a bit of a joke too since there was no shortage of bands with that in their name.

The band started in the Ritenour High School radio station after hours. It was just Rob Wagoner, myself and another friend Keith. This would have been very late 1982. We banged around recording to a two track until the school year ended then moved to the basement of Keith's parents house since they were in California for the summer. Prior to that we had also added Tom Sutter on bass. It was during this summer of 1983 that we really started putting a set together and writing more songs. There were a lot of comps out at the time and Rob commented we were better than most of those bands already. Considering these were mostly Mystic comps that wasn't really a great feat. It was also during this time that Rob declared we would play Mississippi Nights. I can't remember if he said within the year or not but we did accomplish that in August of 1984 opening for MIA.

The next phase was the fall of 1983 when we had to move from Keith's basement to Robs' house were we set up in his room to practice and record to a cassette with two microphones. I'm guessing those tapes are some place if they didn't get recorded over later. We had a line up change during the early months of 1984 losing Keith and replacing him with Fritz Noble who we had met at Mr. Records. We were amazed by his playing because he had hi hats, having him with us increased the momentum. After playing with Fritz for a month or so we recorded the first demo, mostly just pulled songs from the practice tapes and dubbed them to one tape, made copies and sold them at New Values. At this point we had still not played a show.

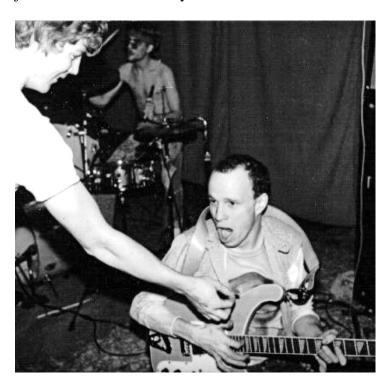
Our first show was the infamous Offenders gig that was raided by the vice squad at the Bernard Pub. Up until then we knew a couple of people from hanging out at New Values and going to a few shows but we didn't hang out in the scene. Rob and I spent our Saturday nights hanging out at the community college station KCFV for the Radio One/Faster and Louder show. It was through the DJ for the show Rob Meirhoffer that we got on the Offenders gig. After that show we were pretty much immersed



into the scene over night. We played a lot of house parties and then got our second show opening for the Rude Pets and The Unconscious Five at the Tivoli. Before that I had been reluctant to get involved with people outside our own band. Fritz and Rob had to actually come to my house one night to talk me into playing our first party. But from that Tivoli show on we played more parties and I was more than happy to do it. The other highlight of that early summer was a New Values basement show with Drunks with Guns and Proud Young Men.

During the summer we pretty much lost our bass player Tom due to his schedule so we played a lot of these parties without a bass player then in August added Gary Yoxen. I think the first show was with MIA at Mississippi Nights.

Going into the fall of '84 we played some pretty cool shows, 45 Grave/Vandals, Stretch Marks in KC, TSOL and more house parties. We did a huge NYE party at Bob Thurmond's house in Overland. He joined the band when Gary moved to Atlanta a few months later. We played more shows than I can



remember right now. The next really big one was with Battalion of Saints at Mississippi Nights in June of '85. We hit the road a few more times to Columbia, MO, Topeka, KS and Springfield, IL.

In January '86 we played with Naked Raygun and SIU-E and that made us enough money to record in a real studio. Well, in a guy's basement in St. Charles anyway. This would be the second demo that we didn't really sell for very long since we broke up not long after we made it available. We did a lot of shows at Turners in between but ended up doing our last show with Naked Raygun at Turner's in April '86. Fritz was more interested in doing Culture Shock and Rob and I had been talking to Mike Doskocil about doing something, which led to the forming of Ultraman.

#### **White Suburban Youth members:**

December 1982 through January 1984 Tim Jamison vocals, Rob Wagoner guitar, Tom Sutter bass, Keith Ubelien drums.

January 1984 Fritz Nobel drums.

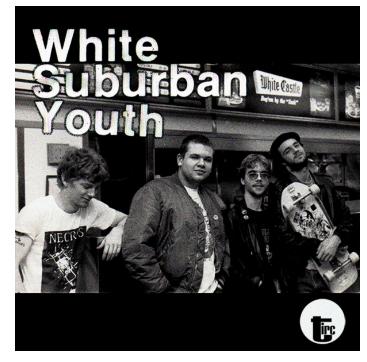
August 1984 Gary Yoxen bass.

April 1985 Bob Thurmond bass.

"So This Is Apathy" recorded February 1984 with Tim, Rob, Tom, and Fritz.

"February 1986 demo" (I don't know that it ever had a name) with Tim, Rob, Bob, and Fritz.

[2021 Update: Complete Recordings are available for free download from <u>tircrecords.bandcamp.com</u>]





# THE HARD FEELINGS



THE HARD FEELINGS from Austin, Texas, came to St. Louis for a gig at the Way Out Club just before Halloween last October. They proceeded to lay down an incredibly raw, powerful groove of mean, lowdown and gritty garage-punk-blues and rocked that small south city dive and the small crowd of people gathered there to see them. The band is fronted by John Schooley, who many of you may remember as the guitarist from the great Columbia band, the Revelators (Crypt Records). Before the Hard Feelings hit the stage I got a chance to chat with them while they dined at Burger King across the street. Also in attendance and helping out on the discussion was Hank Caveman.

HIAMB: Who are you and what do ya do?

John Schooley: Schooley, guitar and vocals.

**Trey:** Trey, drums. **Willis:** Willis, bass.

HIAMB: First off, a few questions for John. Why did you leave Missouri after the Revelators split up?

**Schooley:** Uh... it sucks?! [Awkward silence descends.]

#### HIAMB [to John]: Are you originally from Columbia?

**Schooley:** No, I'm from Niangua, Missouri. It's between Springfield and Lebanon, in southwest Missouri, population 350, salu! [Laughs.] And I wanted to move to Austin because when the Revelators toured, nobody seemed to give a shit about us anywhere except when we played there, and that show really kicked ass. We played at Emo's in the summer of '97 with Big Foot Chester. And I met Walter (Daniels), and Mike Mariconda and just really had a blast there.



Hank Caveman: The Revelators toured Europe, right?

**Schooley:** Yeah, we went to Europe first, actually, and we were there for about two months. That was before we toured anywhere in America.

Hank: And your album (We Told You Not to Cross Us, Crypt Records) actually sold better in Europe, didn't it?

**Schooley:** Yeah, that's just cuz Crypt sold more in Europe than in America.

HIAMB: Speaking of Crypt, is the second LP ever going to see the light of day?

**Schooley:** I doubt it. It was supposed to come out in September, and got pushed back, and now it's just not even happening, cuz, strangely, the Pagans records didn't sell, ya know, shitloads, and I guess Tim (Warren) was banking on that for some

reason. You'd think he would get better at being a record label executive. I mean, they're awesome, but, I mean... how many people found out about the Pagans since Everybody Hates You came out, but didn't find that, and now wanna buy two other LPs with Pagans stuff, much of it which was already released on Everybody Hates You? So, anyway, it's probably not coming out on Crypt anytime in the immediate future.

[Editor's note: Crypt eventually released the 2nd LP, Let a Poor Boy Ride..., in 2009, as well as a live record, Live on the Radio! 89.5 FM KOPN, in 2018]

#### HIAMB: So are the other two of you from Austin originally or did you move there from other places, too?

**Trey:** I'm from Texas originally. Victoria. It's a small town south of Austin, and I just moved to Austin to find people to play with, cuz Victoria sucks. I moved there about four or five years before I joined this band. **Willis:** I'm from southern New Mexico but had relocated to Albuquerque for a couple years and then moved to Austin and within about three weeks joined up with this band. At the time their old bass player was having some problems, and they were looking for a replacement.

HIAMB: What was it like for the Hard Feelings to record with Mike Mariconda at Sweatbox? I mean, the guy was a Raunch Hand!

**Schooley:** It was cool. I mean, my association with Mariconda goes back to the Revelators' single we did with Walter Daniels on Sympathy, and he showed up and produced that, and I really thought he kicked ass. Like, he's kind of a loudmouth and is really opinionated and shit, but he really knows his shit, and so I respected him right

off because I could see he knew what he was doing. He just showed up for the session for that single and kinda took over the engineering and stuff. We really liked working with him so he ended up producing the second Revelators record, ya know, if that ever comes out... and he's the one that encouraged me to move down to Austin after the Revelators broke up. We just recorded a new album this summer with Mariconda again, and he said he just wants producer credit, but he plays guitar on it, on one track. It's gonna come out on a different label next time because, the thing was, Long Gone John (Sympathy) didn't wanna do vinyl for the new record cuz he's doing vinyl on some shit, but not on everything, and he didn't wanna release ours on vinyl. So we decided that we still want to look for somebody who's going to wanna release it on vinyl, too. So we're still working out the label details right now. But it should be out by sometime in the spring of 2002, and we plan on going to Europe in April so hopefully we'll have a little time to promote it overseas before we go on tour.

HIAMB: So John, you honed your guitar skills while touring a couple times with R.L. Burnside, playing alongside him in his band. How did you land that gig and what was it like touring with him?

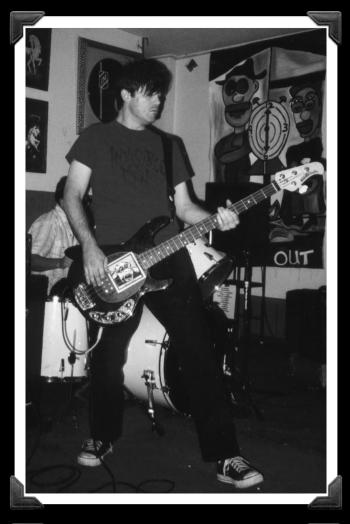
**Schooley:** Well, I ended up getting on it cuz the guy that was R.L.'s booking agent went to grad school at Mizzou and I was friends with him, and when the Revelators played with the Neckbones... well, basically the reason I got it was because Kenny Brown, the guy that usually plays guitar in R.L.'s band, got a DWI and he couldn't drive the van, and at the time R.L. wasn't making enough money to pay someone to be a tour manager and have Kenny play. They needed somebody that could drive the van AND play. The guitar player from the Neckbones had filled in for Kenny once, but the Neckbones were getting ready to go on tour so he couldn't do it again. The Revelators had played some shows with the Neckbones, so they knew me and knew I could play some slide. So between the Neckbones recommending me and knowing the booking agent, I



got the gig. We played two weeks in America. We went out to the West Coast and played a bunch of shows there, and then we played at some blues festivals in Europe. T-Model Ford was the opening act. I had to drive from Missouri down to Mississippi to pick up T-Model and Spam, and then drive them from there to New Mexico, where we met up with R.L. and Cedric (his grandson and drummer) and started the tour. So I had a whole two days of drivin' with just me and T-Model Ford and Spam in the van. That was interesting. When we met up with R.L. and Cedric I couldn't get them to practice with me... I thought we'd at least run through some songs during the sound check, but I couldn't get 'em to do even that. So when I got onstage for the first show I hadn't practiced with 'em at all. I just had to down a few drinks and get up there. It ended up coming out fine--I figured out how to play with 'em pretty quickly. I had listened to the albums and played along with 'em enough that I knew the songs pretty well. But they played some songs I'd never heard before so I just had to improvise somethin' on the spot and make it look like I knew what I was doing. [Laughs.]

That was amazing. So I got to play with somebody I was a huge fan of, and even got a trip to Europe out of it. And these two tours are really the only time I ever made any money playing guitar in my whole life!

Hank: Wow, that is amazing. Cuz the Revelators – if I'm not mistaken – you guys never played in any bands before that band, right? Didn't the Revelators come into existence because of the Oblivians show, and you put the band together to play that show...?





**Schooley:** Well, we'd been talking about starting a band, and we didn't start it because of the Oblivians, but that was kinda what got us off our ass. Because the Oblivians were coming to town, and not many good shows came to Columbia back then. And we were like, "man, we should get off our ass," cuz there weren't any other bands in town to open for them.

HIAMB: Had you ever played guitar before that?

**Schooley:** Oh yeah, I'd been playing guitar for awhile, just like in my bedroom. Ya know, most people probably didn't know that I even played guitar.

HIAMB: What other bands have you been in, Trey?

**Trey:** I've been on two 7"s, one on Rip Off Records with The Young Losers and then one on Big Neck with The Distractors.

Willis: I was in a couple of bands in Albuquerque but this is pretty much my first "real" band.

HIAMB: Tell me about the songwriting process for The Hard Feelings.

**Schooley:** Well, I write most of the songs. I'll write a riff and then show up in practice and then bang it out and after that they do their part and it all just sorta comes together pretty smoothly.

HIAMB: Speaking of songwriting... about the song "(We Need Another) Vietnam," I mean, I know it's not meant to be taken literally and that it's a tongue-in-cheek slap at slacker society, but I was wondering if, because of the recent events of 9/11 if you're still doing that one live and whatnot...

**Schooley:** It was actually from an episode of *The Simpsons*. It's one in which Bart and Lisa are watching TV and they're watching a take-off of the Schoolhouse Rock "When a Bill Becomes a Law" thing and Lisa says something about how it's supposed to appeal to generation X and Bart says "we need another Vietnam." [Laughs.] And that's our show stopper, too. It's what we usually finish our set with so yeah, we're still playing it. And I mean, I'm sure some people might take it the wrong way, because it was obviously written tongue-in-cheek. But it's still true in the sense that we need another Vietnam, not that we need another war to go kill a bunch of

people, but if we have something like that maybe it'll make people think about their lives and our government and its role in the world, especially for something like this that just happened, ya know, instead of just blindly

waving the flag, and, ya know, "go team" and all that bullshit, it might make people think, well, why does the rest of the world hate America?

HIAMB: Tell me about the current music scene indictment that goes into writing your music. What ignited the fires in your bellies?

**Schooley:** Well, it's just been the same ever since the Revelators—there just aren't enough bands out there playing rock'n'roll like the type I like to hear and there's a lot of shit that's like, just crap that gets played that people think is great, and we can make fun of that.

**Trey:** And we all work really well together. We've all been playing in bands separately for X-number of years, so when we get in a fuckin' room together we just—BANG—hit it off. It just happens within like five or ten minutes.

**Schooley:** And there's always been plenty of bad music around to get pissed off at, so it's like a never-ending inspiration.



HIAMB: You guys also played at the Sympathy Showcase at SXSW this year with the White Stripes and Greg Oblivian's Reigning Sound. Was this showcase actually part of the "official" festival?

**Schooley:** Yeah, we weren't even gonna originally play it because SXSW is just like an industry wankfest, but the deal was Walter knows the guy who's the director of SXSW, and he's a pretty cool guy, and the White Stripes were already gonna be in town and were going to be playing at some private party, not affiliated with SXSW, and so SXSW found out that they were gonna be in town, and they thought it was gonna look stupid for the big buzz band to be playing in town and not be a part of SXSW, and so, since there was already us, the Crack Pipes, and Big Foot Chester—ya know, three bands on Sympathy in Austin—so it was like, well we already have a readymade showcase right there. But anyway, Walter got screwed and Big Foot Chester didn't get to be on the bill and so it was us, the Crack Pipes, Reigning Sound and the White Stripes. It didn't really help us at all cuz all of the hipster types were just there to see the White Stripes and they didn't really give a shit about us, so...

Willis: That's part of the problem with playing with the White Stripes is that at Emo's or wherever, you get your hipsters that are just there to see them because they're the buzz band and they don't even come in to see the other bands on the bill.

It was at about this point that we all realized we'd better beat feet back over to the Way Out so the band could get ready to play. So this is where the interview ended. To find out more about this great band, visit their website at thehardfeelings.com, and be sure to pick up their records on Sympathy, Gearhead, and Dropkick Records.







The Young Lions Conspiracy, I.S.A. "What Are You Doing to Participate?"

The Young Lions is a group of like-minded individuals who believe in living life to the fullest and continuing to move forward—always moving forward because if you are not moving forward you become stagnant. It is an ideal that promotes an attitude of diversity in both sound and everyday life. Keep your filters wide open. You don't have to do what everybody else does



and once you realize that, it frees you up to be yourself and express yourself in ways that only you can ever realize. It's much healthier and fun to listen to all kinds of music and find the connections. The sounds with true soul will ring out loud and clear! Just keep doing your best and by all means keep pushing your expression. Stay true to the cause and don't get caught up in any of "their" hype.

If there's any one person involved in the underground punk/rock'n'roll scene today that is the be-all, end-all embodiment of the Young Lions Conspiracy, capable of assimilating influences from multiple music genres ranging from punk/new wave, free jazz, folk blues, reggae, soul, funk, and rock'n'roll and blending them to form his own unique style, it's Tim Kerr of Austin, Texas.

I first became acquainted with Tim's work back in college in the mid-1980s when I heard my first Big Boys records. The Big Boys provided me hours of musical enjoyment and curiosity (hell, they played sloppy, fun, rebellious funk'n'roll better than just about band before or since, IMHO, including the overrated Red Hot Chili Peppers), and were part of a burgeoning '80s Texas punk scene that also included the Dicks, the Butthole Surfers, Scratch Acid, Really Red, the Offenders, etc. In fact, I'd dare say that the Big Boys had a bigger impact on me personally than

similar bands such as the Minutemen or any other funk/ska/ soul punk bands at the time. At the time I had no idea who Tim Kerr was or that I'd be a fan of his various musical endeavors over the next two decades. But as time wore on, I would continually see his name associated with other bands that I liked, namely Poison 13, Jack O' Fire, the Lord High Fixers, the Monkeywrench, King Sound Quartet, and most recently, the Now Time Delegation. Around the time that I first

got the Jack O' Fire Beware the Souless Cool LP, I noticed an interesting, primitive-looking logo showing a clenched fist grasping a harmonica above a circle with "Young Lions Conspiracy ISA" encircling a lion and the words "What are you doing to participate?" scrawled below. Ever since then I've been wanting to ask Tim about the Young Lions, to find out exactly what it's all about and where it came from. Here's what I found out.

Interview by Kopper

**HIAMB:** I once read an interview with Big Daddy Soul on an insert that came with the Lord High Fixers' "Talking to Tomorrow" 10" from 1995. What's the story with Big Daddy Soul?

**Tim Kerr:** "Big Daddy Soul" is a person who has been documenting the Young Lion's Conspiracy for some time... But the point of all of this is the thoughts and ideas and how they make you think or pertain to you. That's what's important, not the source-bearer.

HIAMB: In that particular interview, he mentioned that the Young Lions Conspiracy was growing from that of a smaller underground organization built on the realization of facts and ideas brought about by cause and effect and demise of organizations that have come before and organizations that are happening now. What sorts of organizations are

these? To me, it sounds like a modern update on the word "conventions" as it relates to customary practices or rules for artistic behavior, am I right? As in musical conventions? This rings of the old artist/poet bohemians and beatniks revolting against convention, or living and creating in an unconventional, nonconforming way...

**TK:** Organizations as in a group of people trying to organize, get something going... Something that is growing. Conventions are stale old get-togethers, staying within the confines, conventional. They're an excuse for funny hats and throwing water balloons out of windows, when in fact, why do you need an excuse? Once again, the beauty of all this is the individual's interpretation and yours on that interview was great!



HIAMB: It was also stated, though, that "the lack of information is in reality the strength." How is that so? TK: You can get bogged down with "information" and forget to really think about what is being presented to you. Really think about the words and sentences instead of where the book came from. How many times have you been at a show where people are talking about, [paraphrasing] "well, so-and-so is in this band so therefore they're great!" instead of just listening and deciding for yourself how it makes YOU think or feel without any other outside information except what is being presented to you? Once again, it's the ideas and emotions and how they relate to you—not the bearer of those ideas.

**HIAMB:** How would you trace the origins of the Young Lions?

**TK:** I read something on the back of a Sun Ra record and that's what got me interested. It was a collection of thoughts that were exactly how I was feeling.

**HIAMB:** Where did the manifesto or idiom of the Young Lions Conspiracy originate? If there is a manifesto, what would that be?

**TK:** I'm not sure when this all first started but the main emphasis is on staying open-minded, because if you are open at all times, you are learning at all times.

**HIAMB:** So, obviously you must have been really moved, intrigued, and even influenced by that Sun Ra record. What other artists or musicians, like him (free jazz or otherwise), did you take influence from?

**TK:** There is so much! I listen to different stuff all the time—John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, early John Martyn, Nick Drake, Irish traditional, Minor Threat, the Minutemen, Aaron Copland, Fugazi, Curtis Mayfield/The Impressions, Sly and the Family Stone...

**HIAMB:** Everything I've read about the Young Lions Conspiracy seems to be somewhat vague, yet precise in its vagueness. Do you think that's accurate?

**TK:** I don't think it is vague at all. Bottom line: Stay open to what is happening around you and learn. You never know who will be next to be part of your family or your new favorite food or song or book or cool place and so on. Celebrate your time here. That is not vague at all to me, and it makes so much sense that I try to apply it at all times to my time here. This original seed, or idea, is completely open to grow to become your own philosophy, coming from your own experiences, because everyone's experiences and their interpretations will be different. The only given is if you shut yourself off from things then you shut yourself off from living life to the fullest, along with all of the knowledge and emotions that come with that.

**HIAMB:** Do you get a lot of people asking you about the Young Lions Conspiracy? Any confusion or backlash about it?

**TK:** I get asked questions but not a whole lot. The only hostility comes from people who think that, because a thought or experience is written down, then the writer must think of him or herself as above the one receiving the message, when in reality it's just one thought, one person's opinion or interpretation, a kind of "did you ever wonder or think this?" that is

there for your discussion, thought or time. A human being trying to connect with another human being.

**HIAMB:** I've actually heard folks saying they view the Young Lions Conspiracy as just another elitist clique. Why do you think that is?

**TK:** Well, first of all, people are going to "view" what they view no matter how spelled out it is for them. I can only speak for myself, but I am not concerned with someone's "bag it, tag it" quick attitude they may have applied to me or my choices, or anyone else's for that matter. If you understand the "stay open" first lesson of the Young Lions Conspiracy, I personally don't see how you can equate that with an elitist clique.

**HIAMB:** I don't think they put that tag on it once they know what it's all about—in fact, I'm sure that once they DO understand the message that these preconceptions diminish considerably—but I think that just by having a name associated with it, and a name that also includes the mysterious word "conspiracy" in it, makes them feel that it's somewhat elitist, or an inclusive club, something out of *The X-Files* or something... know what I mean?

**TK:** Yes, I do. In fact, we were having a long discussion about this question and were coming to some of the same conclusions. Bottom line: a name is something to rally around for better or worse.

**HIAMB:** List some of the best teachers you've encountered in helping you on the road to realizing your ideals that shaped who you are today.

**TK:** For me, it's a combination of people, incidents, experiences, etc. that I learn and am learning from. You can pretty much learn from anything. There are things that have made a strong impression on me such as the original community spirit of punk/hardcore, friends and friends to come who are doing or creating different things for the right reasons.

**HIAMB:** What about books or literature? Who are some of your favorite authors, thinkers, or philosophers? Read any good books lately?

**TK:** I am reading the autobiography of (jazz genius) Anthony Braxton right now. Sun Ra's biography really made a lot of things inside me connect. I like Brendan Behan's stuff and the book *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (by John Irving) was really great. Of course *Howl* (Allen Ginsberg) is pretty amazing and dead on... and yes, I have read all of the Harry Potters and thought they were great! There is a guy that I read about in Shane MacGowan's biography (*A Drink With Shane*) that writes a lot of stuff on zen and tao that is really great but I can't think of his name right now.



**HIAMB:** I'm curious to know what other sorts of entertainment you enjoy. What sorts of movies do you like, for example?

**TK:** I like movies like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *War of the Buttons*, coming of age-type stuff and things that have to do with subcultures... documentaries, etc. I like seeing old '40s/'50s/'60s Americana "ideal"-type things... architecture, mom-and-pop stores, etc. I like traveling and going to thrift stores! Bicycles, skating, scooters...

**HIAMB:** Skating, yeah... isn't that how you broke your wrist?

**TK:** Yeah, I had just landed a sweeper and after the initial stall... I went forward, and the board did not. It was bad... I have a plate. Oh well.

HIAMB: Let's shift gears here and talk about some of your contemporaries. What do you think of Mick Collins' work? I see a lot of similarities between the two of you, creatively speaking. You collaborated with Mick on the King Sound Quartet project back in '96 and recorded some amazing stuff. What exactly caused the failure of the 2000 King Sound Quartet

session (with Matt Verta Ray of Speedball Baby) that was to have evolved into the second album? And do you think you and Mick will ever be able to get back together on any future projects?

**TK:** Uh... I don't see any similarities at all, other than we have both been in bands. He comes from a completely different cut of cloth than I, and I will just leave it at that. The failure of the King Sound Quartet meant the birth of the Now Time Delegation. We gave 120%, Mick didn't.

HIAMB: Sounds like you two had quite a falling out! The similarities I was getting at are the obvious connection to blues, soul, and R&B that you both seem to share, how you both pull influences from classic artists to create your music, and the fact that you've both been involved with so many bands over the years. Sorry if that question struck a nerve. I suppose the two of you could have similar tastes/experiences in music but differ substantially when it comes to personal philosophies and ethics.

**TK:** Don't worry, I'm not upset and yes we are completely two different people that happen to like similar things... You were completely right in your assumption.

**HIAMB:** Were the songs on the Now Time Delegation album originally slated for the second KSQ LP? And does the Now Time Delegation plan on recording another record at some point?

**TK:** Most of the Now Time songs were intended to be the next King Sound, so yeah. I'm not sure what is going to happen with the Now Time Delegation... Everyone is really busy.

HIAMB: What about Billy Childish? He seems to be continually evolving, and exploring new musical directions with his various bands over the years. His new band, in fact (The Buff Medways) seems to be heavily influenced by Jimi Hendrix. AND he's a great poet, artist, and storyteller as well. Have you ever spoken to him regarding the YLC and its similarities with Stuckism (his artistic movement)? The philosophies or manifestos seem almost identical in theory.

**TK:** I will thank you for this one, that is indeed a compliment, and yes, we have become good friends. We have talked about a lot of things and just recently about maybe doing something together at some point.

**HIAMB:** Please list the bands you've played with in the past.

**TK:** Big Boys, Court Reporters, Poison 13, Bad Mutha Goose and The Brothers Grimm, Seventh

Samurai, Jack O' Fire, Fist Fight, Lord High Fixers, King Sound Quartet, Monkeywrench, Now Time Delegation, and Total Sound Group Direct Action Committee.



**HIAMB:** You've been in so many bands over the years... What has been the main reason behind them breaking up? Is it differences in artistic/musical direction? Internal problems?

**TK:** Bands are like riding in the station wagon with your brothers and sisters when your parents took you on those long vacations... at some point you have to get out of the car.

**HIAMB:** What's been the most bizarre/crazy experience you've had from playing in all of those bands over the past 20 years? The one that really sticks out in your memory the most?

TK: There really are too many... really! Everything from Biscuit (Big Boys) covered in motor oil and honey, the couple of, uh, small riots, and being wined and dined in Bad Mutha Goose. The first time the Lord High Fixers went to Japan, being thrown in the air like the Eskimos when the Monkeywrench played Spain, recording the Quadrajets record in someone's house where we had the drums in the kitchen and amps in the bedrooms and bathroom, doing a question-and-answer thing at a college in Slovenia and being on their national news with the first question being 'What is the Young Lion's Conspiracy?'... etc.

**HIAMB:** When and where was your best show ever? The one that really blew you away as a musician/performer... what were the circumstances, etc.?

**TK:** Any Lord High Fixers shows period. Especially the early ones when no one knew what we were up to or what to expect. Just the look on friends' faces was priceless.

**HIAMB:** Tell me about Sweatbox Studios (in Austin). You obviously do a lot of production for other bands that record there. What's your philosophy on how to get the best sound out of a band?

TK: The Sweatbox is owned by Mike Vasquez. I started helping out friends there when they would record and have just stayed there. The room is great and has a really great sound! I am into getting the best sound with the mic placement and stuff, instead of using studio tricks. I'm also really big into the "feel" of the music and set it up to where you don't have to wear headphones, which I, for one, prefer. The big thing to remember is that you want to be able to look back at that experience and smile. When you play that record 20 years from now it should bring back great memories about that one documentation at that one time with that one set of people.

**HIAMB:** What if a band wants to get you to produce their stuff... What should they do?

**TK:** I don't do this for a living, though I do it all the time, so the beauty for me is I do things I like. I also like the idea that if someone wants to work with me they have to work a little to try and get a way to get a hold of me. That kind of weeds out the people that don't really have their hearts into the choices they are making in the first place

HIAMB: So the name of your newest combo is The Total Sound Group Direct Action Committee. If that doesn't sound like a Young Lions name I don't know what does! How does this band differ musically or creatively from any of your previous bands, especially the Lord High Fixers?

**TK:** To me it's an extension of what the Lord High Fixers had started but just pushing it further. There is a Hammond organ that has been prominently added to the mix, along with new people and new sets of ideas.

**HIAMB:** Who is in the new band? Mike Carroll? Anyone from any of your other previous groups that we may know?

**TK:** Yeah, Mike is singing. Pat is our organ player and he has a band called McLemore Ave. He played on some Jack O' Fire and Lord High Fixers stuff, too. The drummer is Ben who has a band where he plays guitar and sings called Attack Formation. He was in Tune In Tokyo and has played some with Sean Na Na.

Nick plays bass and also plays bass for the Crack Pipes.

**HIAMB:** What can you tell me about the Young Lions Conspiracy compilation CD coming out on Estrus? Are these mainly bands that hold these same artistic/creative ideals or are they mainly just your favorite bands right now?

**TK:** This was (Estrus head honcho) Dave Crider's idea, which (I think) started from the realization that there were some cool bands that I was talking about but he just didn't have enough resources to help. He asked me if I would be into doing some sort of comp with bands that I knew of or felt were coming from the same sort of ideas or philosophy that the Young Lions encompassed or were part of the Young Lions. I haven't really had a lot of time to think about it yet, but I think it would be cool to have a combination of old and new stuff on it.

**HIAMB:** What other current musicians, bands, or record labels out there do you believe are in tune with your philosophies and are carrying the Young Lions' torch and planting seeds?

**TK:** Estrus, Touch and Go, Dischord... great, great, honest, human beings! As far as musicians or bands, there are just too many to mention and I wouldn't want to leave anyone out.

**HIAMB:** One of the best new bands I've heard lately has been the Lost Sounds from Memphis. Are you familiar with them? And what's your opinion of the White Stripes? Worthy of the hype surrounding the duo?

**TK:** The Lost Sounds are cool as well as The White Stripes.

**HIAMB:** Finally, can we ever hope to see your new band perform live in St. Louis? It doesn't seem like your previous bands ever did much touring.

**TK:** It would be great to play there so who knows, maybe! All of the bands from Jack O' Fire on have all had people from other states, cities, and everyone had or have regular jobs so you can't take off for very long. Total Sound are all in Austin so it might be easier to pull something off. What're the thrift stores

like there!?  $\stackrel{\text{like}}{=}$ 

END.

For more information about Tim's work, please visit his website at timkerr.net.





### On some nights in St. Louis,

playing the scene is like whipping a dead horse. But not this night. This night was April 8, 2002. A Monday night, no less. The Eyeliners were in town at the Rocket Bar. The place was jam-packed. A friggin' sweatbox. For at least one night, rock'n'roll was alive and hitting on all cylinders. The Eyeliners have evolved from a cute and charming garage-rock trio to one of the most formidable pop-punk acts. Guitarist Gel jumps and dives while blowing big, pink bubbles and throwing her leopard-skin guitar behind her head. Bassist Lisa locks into the beat with a cool swing. And most noticeably, drummer Laura, once confined to the drum kit, is now front and center as lead vocalist, pointing out her victims, then cutting them down with delicious punk'n'roll screams. I caught up with The Eyeliners after their show in an echoey back room of the club. The room provided a passageway to the beer for the barbacks and tonight it also provided a quiet haven for HIAMB and The Eveliners! The adrenaline was still dripping from the show and the gals were quite gabby! You can really tell they are sisters when you sit down and talk to them. A couple of them look alike, a couple of their voices sound alike, and they do sister-ish stuff like finish each other's sentences, or sometimes say the same words simultaneously in an eerie (yet charming) triplet tone. Menace The Dennis backed me up as I delved into the past of these rock'n'roll sweethearts!

Matt HIAMB: I'm here with The Eyeliners! Introduce yourselves?

Gel: I'm Gel, guitar and backing vocals.

Laura: I'm Laura. I do lead vocals and drums, but right now, just lead

vocals

Lisa: Lisa. Bass & backing vocals. Matt HIAMB: You're all sisters.

Gel: It's true!

Laura: The rumor is true!

**Matt HIAMB:** Did you see that you were Critic's Choice in the *Riverfront Times*?

Gel: Oh, I did see that!

Matt HIAMB: ...and they said you were from... Chicago? Would you like to set the record straight?

**All Eyeliners** (in the aforementioned eerie triplet tone): We are from Chicago. (big laughter)

**Gel:** Every city has been saying that we're from like, somewhere different, like Berkeley, the Bay Area, LA, Chicago, so we're like, "Every city we should announce ourselves from the town that the paper says we're from and just keep it a big mystery." So we're gonna start doing it... but we are from Albuquerque.

Matt HIAMB: And you got started how?

Laura: We've always actually been into rock'n'roll 'cause our parents were like the ultimate '50s couple. So we grew up with Chuck Berry and stuff like that.

Gel: Yeah, Fats Domino... Lisa: Jerry Lee Lewis...

Laura: Yeah, all that good stuff. So ...

Gel: ...and then, Lisa and I decided we wanted to learn how to play, so we taught ourselves (Gel & Lisa laugh) and each other... and then, uh, from there we just, we figured out songs for about a year and then we decided we wanted to start writing our own songs. Laura was gonna sing for us and then we couldn't find a drummer. So we taught

her just the simple beat to "I Love Rock'n'Roll" and she started singing over it. And we were thinking, "That's it!"

Matt HIAMB: So how old were you when you first got going? When

you said, "Let's get a band together!" Lisa: We were still in high school. Laura: Yeah, she was like 17 still. Matt HIAMB: Albuguerque High?

Gel: We grew up in a small town. Laura: Yeah, south of Albuquerque.

Gel: It's called Belen, B-E-L-E-N. Population: 6,500

Laura: Yeah, there was a very small punk population in our town. Y'know sometimes you go to small towns and there's like a really big... y'know, group of kids that's into punk... sometimes the best shows. But, our town there's us and our friends and there's Cowboy Mel... (In the interest of you, the HIAMB reader, we have deleted a tangential conversation of a Kid Rock wannabe in Detroit.)

**Gel:** OK, Albuquerque... it's a nice, quiet town, like when we get to go home from the tour, it's nice to relax there. The punk scene... um, it's pretty good. It's OK.

Laura: In Albuquerque?

**Gel:** There used to be more bands like us and garage punk bands, like The Drags and Scared Of Chaka's from there. Now it's really emo-ish. We're the only punk band left.

Lisa: The last garage punk band.

Gel & Laura: Yeah, there's no garage.

Matt HIAMB: Really?

Laura: Yeah...but we still do really well there.

Lisa: There's just no all ages clubs.

Laura: Yeah, there's no real punk all ages venue. So that kind of makes it hard. That kind of sucks,

Matt HIAMB: So what kinda stuff did ya listen to growing up? You mentioned Chuck Berry and Fats Domino. In high school what were some of your favorite bands?

**Gel:** Well we got into it because, like, since Junior High, Lisa picked up Dead Kennedys and just started getting into that. And there was a lot of new wave and then, um, pretty much had like the Ramones, The Descendents, Stiff Little Fingers, and Blondie, and Devo, and... (to

Lisa) What were you gonna say?

Lisa: Well, I was just thinking how weird it was back then. It wasn't like, shows—especially in Albuquerque, a lotta bands didn't stop—but there was a club called Beyond Ordinary where they would have like, for kids under 21, and you could go and they played cool music. It was like really cool music and that's where you could hear and get exposed to all this stuff you would never hear otherwise. That place was a very important part of growing up, I think. But then it closed. It closed like in '95.

**Gel:** And they had a huge ceremony... **Lisa:** A funeral procession (starts laughing)!

Gel: Yeah, a funeral procession with all the punks in Albuquerque.

Matt HIAMB: A funeral procession?!?!

Gel: Yeah...

Lisa: Yeah, for the club that closed.

Gel: It was such a staple of Albuquerque that inspired so many kids...

**Laura:** This is back when the scene was big... **Gel:** ... and they walked down Main Street...

Lisa: ... with headstones and mohawks... made the newspapers!

**Matt HIAMB:** Then how did you ladies make it out of Albuquerque?

Gel: We were playing this show with a band from LA and we were still Psychodrama at the time. Then when they got back to their hometown in LA, they called us and said, "We have a show. Do you guys wanna open?" And we were like, "In LA? Yeah!"

Matt HIAMB: And what band was that?

**Gel:** They were called Black Angel's Death Song.

**Lisa:** Very Velvet Underground.

**Gel:** Yeah, they were very Velvet Undergroundy and they were very big with *Flipside*.

Matt HIAMB: Oh yeah, in fact, I saw you a lot in Flipside.

Laura: Yeah! See, what happened was, we had very recently just put out our first Psychodrama 7" that we did. We recorded it. Everything by ourselves. Very lo-fi. And so, we were like, "Yeah, we'll go!" So we went all the way to LA for one show, 'cause it was too short notice to get anything else.

**Matt HIAMB:** Yeah, 'cause for those of us that are not geographically inclined, it's not just a hop, skip, and a jump from Albuquerque to LA.

**Laura:** 13 hours. And we drove all the way out there for the one show. I don't even know if we got paid or anything...

Lisa: I don't think we did.

**Gel:** But all the people from *Flipside* were there and I guess some people from the *LA Weekly* or something...

**Laura:** Actually, we went back and got a write-up in the *LA Weekly*... It was like, a Sunday matinee show. Yeah, it was all day...

**Gel:** And they had a big bar-b-que and everything... and (the owner of Al's Bar) said, "I want you to play LAST."

Lisa: Well, normally in LA they do a thing where they have an unknown band play last so people can still see you...

Gel: ... and the headliner will play right before.

**Lisa:** We played and not that many people left. So we were lucky. And that's where we got our first interview in *Flipside* and a lotta good stuff came out of that. Al's Bar was such dive, but it kind of became home to us after a while. (laughs)

**Gel:** Yeah, it's downtown LA in this like, sketchy neighborhood. That one show opened *so many* doors for us.

Laura: It was crazy. We took a lot of crazy chances. But it worked.

**Lisa:** Then on that same little tour where we got put on the Sunday show, we went up to San Francisco and Tim Yohannan that used to run *Maximum Rocknroll...* 

Laura: He was the one, and that's when we played the Purple Onion...

**Gel:** And I think he just happened to be out drinking that night. And we didn't know what he looked like or anything, but some kid I was talking to went, "Tim Yohannan just walked in" and I was just like, nervous and excited and he came up and stood right in front of us and bought a Psychodrama 7".

**Lisa:** The punk scene was so much more like... open for beginning bands and stuff. It seems like it's a lot more closed now.



Gel: Well, Tim Yohannan's not around anymore now. He passed away a couple years ago. Laura: And then

**Laura:** And then *Flipside*'s really gone now.

Matt HIAMB: Some of the guys from *Flipside* are doing *Razorcake* now, though.

Laura: Yeah.

Matt HIAMB: That's a cool zine. I enjoy Nardwuar's articles.

Laura: Yeah, Nardwuar's

**Gel:** I think after that first tour, I think it made us realize that we wanted to be a touring band and not just stay in Albuquerque.

Laura: At that point, we'd been working real hard in

Albuquerque but were still only being put with other girl bands. We wanted to be taken seriously as a band. After that we started getting press in *Flipside* and we actually started getting more national press before we got respect in our hometown.

Lisa: Definitely. It was really weird.

Matt HIAMB: That's not an unusual story, actually.

**Gel:** Yeah, but then the local press did come through. Like when we did our first record on Sympathy For The Record Industry, we were in all the weekly and local papers.

**Lisa:** They were really into it. And then they were real shocked 'cause they saw us with our little Psychodrama thing and then all of a sudden we were signed through Sympathy and it was big news at the time.

**Matt HIAMB:** So what brought about the name change from Psychodrama to The Eyeliners?

**Gel:** Well, we had started to hear there was a folk band in Denver called Psychodrama...

Lisa: ... and one in Australia...

**Gel:** But the main one—when we were in LA we found out about one, from DC, but they were really lewd and...

**Lisa:** They were like a GG Allin-type band... and they'd been banned from every club in California. (laughing)

**Gel** (laughing): ... and even across the country! (all laugh)

**Matt HIAMB** (laughing): So the name was like a black cloud hanging over your heads.

**Gel:** We found out, 'cause one guy actually came thinking he was gonna see that other band and then we got up on stage.

Matt HIAMB: That's funny.

Gel: We were planning on changing our name anyway.

**Lisa:** When we came up with Psychodrama, I don't think we were planning on releasing a record. I don't think we were planning on doing anything much more than playing a friend's party. But then once we did it, we were like, "Oh, we oughta play a club," and when we got more and more into it, we were like, "Well, we maybe should have put a little more thought into that first name, y'know! Now we're kind of stuck!"

**Gel:** I think we saw it in a newspaper as one of the headlines. We didn't put any thought into the first name. But The Eyeliners is fitting, so...

Matt HIAMB: And who came up with that?

**Gel:** We all try to take credit for that.

**Laura:** What we did was, when we were on that tour, we brainstormed on the way home and we wrote down a bunch of names...

**Gel:** 'Cause we didn't want to pick a name that was taken. We didn't want that to happen again, so we made this huge list of names and when we got home we researched them...

**Lisa:** And again, the *Flipside* people were pretty useful there, 'cause they knew all kinds of bands that didn't necessarily have like, national records or something, but they were still well known in the area. They'd be all, "There was a band like that y'know" or whatever.

**Laura:** And if you go back to the first *Flipside* interview there's a note at the very end that we had just changed our name to The Eyeliners.

Matt HIAMB: Just outta curiosity, what were some of the other choices that almost made it?

Laura: I don't knooooow.

**Gel:** I remember The Transisters was one.

Lisa: Oh yeah, it had "sisters" in it.

**Gel:** We thought that was kind of funny, but at that point we still weren't telling people we were related. So... that's the only name I remember, though.

Matt HIAMB: How did that first record come out?

Laura: We kept on playing shows, going to school, y'know, working our jobs. We would play a show and then we'd get up and go to school or work or whatever.

Gel: And then we got asked to play a show with the Red Aunts in our hometown.

Laura: We had already recorded. We went out to LA, recorded a demo...

**Gel:** ...then came back and got to play with the Red Aunts. And when we were playing, the lead singer, she came up standing in front, and as soon as we finished she was like, "That was awesome. You girls should be on Sympathy For The Record Industry." And they had done their first two records on Sympathy. They were friends with him (Long Gone John). They were both from Long Beach. So she was like, "I'll just give him a call. Call me. We're gonna be back in LA in like, 3 days or something." So I called her on the day she told me to call, and she was like, "Oh yeah, he wants to talk to you." So she gave me his number and I called him and he was like, "Well, Terri liked you and she doesn't like ANYBODY. Can you send me something?" So we overnighted him a package and then I called him, and he was like, "Let's do a 7" and then a CD. A 7" to introduce the band and then a full-length CD." And that all happened within a week of the Red Aunts show.

Matt HIAMB: Wow. Fast.

Gel: Yeah, crazy. Then we just did a couple more 7"s with Sympathy.

**Matt HIAMB:** What was it like working with Long Gone John? I love his label and I've heard he's kind of a strange cat.

**Gel:** He's uh... he's eccentric. He's got a pretty cool house. Lots of paintings.

Laura: Art. Hidden rooms and stuff.

**Gel:** His record collection is amazing. He has this record room and like, every inch of it has records and they're just squished together, and any record... he can just find it. He'll be like, "Oh there's this one band and the German version came out at this time" and he'll be like, "whoosh!" and pull out the exact one. He would fly to Europe to buy records. He has weird stuff like mummified babies...

Matt HIAMB: Mummified babies?

Laura: Can we say that in the interview? You might wanna scratch that!

Gel: He also has Sylvain Sylvain's jacket, right?

Lisa: Uh-huh. He's a collector.

Gel: Manson's jacket or something?
Lisa: I think one of the girls' jackets.

**Gel:** He just has this eccentric idea of things he likes and he'll go out and buy them. But um... yeah, so we went to record the *Here Comes Trouble* record and we ended up leaving Sympathy. We left in the middle of recording, too. So we finished the record not having a label, which is kind of scary. But Mass Giorgini (producer of *Here Comes Trouble*) was going to work on some Screeching Weasel stuff right after he finished ours, so he took a rough mix with him and went up to Chicago and played it for



Ben (Weasel, Panic Button Records founder). Then we got a call from

Matt HIAMB: Now did you scout out Mass?

**Gel:** Yeah, because we loved so many of the records that he had done. We always do that, we're like, "OK, let's get some of our favorite records and see who recorded 'em."

**Matt HIAMB:** So you went there and recorded under the impression that Long Gone John was gonna put it out...

Gel: Yeah.

Matt HIAMB: And then he decided not to?

**Gel:** Well, he never heard it or anything. We just had a little disagreement and we decided to leave.

Laura: So we parted ways.

**Matt HIAMB:** So that's how you met Ben, through Mass. And I guess he's been instrumental in helping you out.

Laura: Yeah, he has. Definitely. He put out our next record and that did really well in getting our name out.

**Gel:** Sympathy was really cool, but he ran it by himself, so he couldn't promote or he didn't want ads or anything, really. And Panic Button did.

Laura: And it was kind of good, too, to have the opportunity to be on a label that was, I think, a little more fitting for us.

**Matt HIAMB:** You're a little poppier nowadays than on your first CD. Your first CD was more garage sounding. Is that something you've strived for or... you seem to be getting a lot better every time I see you.

Gel: We keep trying!

Laura: We push ourselves a lot.

**Gel:** We keep thinking, "What should be the next step to make ourselves better?" So for this tour, we thought, well, we had so much trouble last tour with sound and it was hard to see Laura, so we decided to bring her out front from behind the drum set and get a drummer. I think everybody seems to like it.

Matt HIAMB: It's certainly exciting visually.

**Gel:** Well when I told Ben, I said, "I think for our next tour we're gonna get a drummer" and he said people always asked him why we didn't.

**Lisa:** And Ryan (Greene, producer of *Sealed With a Kiss*) said the same thing.

Laura: And we had thought about it. Then we did some shows with the Ataris and they said, "You've gotta come forward!" So when we went out to record with Ryan, he said the same thing and we thought, "OK, we're just gonna do it."

**Gel:** And then Ben called saying that he sold Panic Button to Lookout!... like a week before, so we're like, "We're going to record next week." So I have to call Lookout! and say, "Uh, hi...we're going to record next week so, um... we need some... money(?)" I didn't know how to do that, but they were really cool. We met them at the office like, the next Friday and they gave us a check and they would call and check in, "Is everything OK?" and they took us out to eat. So yeah, they took good care of us. It was just weird it happened right at the time we were going to record. Kinda threw them into a crash course, because they were just taking the label over.

Laura: And we were like, "Here we are!"

Matt HIAMB: How many bands were on Panic Button? There's not a WHOLE lot, just...

Various Eyeliners: Us, Common Rider, Screeching Weasel, Lillingtons... Gel: I guess there's about 8 bands on Panic Button now. Something like that

Matt HIAMB: So you've done all kinds of tours now. Have you been to Europe?

All Eyeliners in a pleading tone: Noooooooo.

Matt HIAMB: You haven't been to Europe?! Where have you been? Canada?

Laura: We haven't even been to Canada. Lisa: Warped Tour will take us to Canada.

Laura: There are times when we've talked about going to Europe, but something else would come up and we would always postpone it. They were trying to get us out there now after this tour in May.

**Gel:** We got three booking agents requesting that we go over there. One contacted our U.S. booking agent and then another contacted Lookout! and we're like, "Whoa!" So I think we're gonna go.

**Matt HIAMB:** So any fun stuff happen on the tours that you'd like to mention for the readers of *Head In A Milk Bottle?* 

Gel: My fall? That wasn't *fun*, but... in Richmond, Virginia, it was the last note of our last song, and when I jumped on the monitor it flipped out from under me and I fell on my head...

Lisa: She fell face-forward.

Matt HIAMB: You fall a lot!

Gel: I do fall a lot.

**Matt HIAMB:** The last time you played here at the Creepy Crawl you fell on your ass WHILE blowing a bubble...

Gel: Oohhh! I do remember that! (laughs)

Matt HIAMB: ...then you just about broke your ass tonight, 'cause the floor was wet.

Laura: The floor was so wet.

**Gel:** I was having to be so careful, 'cause I didn't want to spend another night in the emergency room like I did in Richmond.

Matt HIAMB: So you slammed the floor face first?

Gel: The corner of the monitor.

Matt HIAMB: Ouch!

Lisa: And she's all groggy and her nose is bleeding...

Laura: One of her friends was like, "Gel, if you want to hear the monitor, just ask the soundman to turn it up. Don't dive head-first into it!"

Lisa: Yeah, we were worried she'd broken her nose... had a concussion...

Matt HIAMB: Did you have a concussion?

**Gel:** No, I didn't. I was afraid, but they said I didn't have a concussion... the doctor goes, "Just don't take any aspirin, just in case your brain is bleeding." And I was like, "whaaaaa!" I didn't start crying, but I was just really scared. I didn't know what I had done!

Lisa: And then the next doctor said it was fine.

**Gel:** Yeah, then the next doctor came and he said, "You're fine and you can go to sleep." So...it's been a good tour, though.

Matt HIAMB: Favorite cities to play?

All Eyeliners: St. Louis!

Matt HIAMB: Besides St. Louis. I know it's your favorite! (laughter)
Various Eyeliners chiming in: Chicago, New York, Boston, Orlando...
Houston!

Lisa: The bartenders always get us drunk in Houston.

Gel: They just buy us shots and shots and we can't turn them down, and

Lisa: Ha-ha! That would be rude!

Gel: So me and Lisa have to do every one.

**Lisa:** Can't be rude when you're in Texas. Austin was a really good time.

Laura: San Antonio's good, too.

**Matt HIAMB:** I guess that's about it, really. Except we haven't talked about future plans. I guess the Warped Tour, that's pretty big news for you. **Laura:** The whole Warped Tour.

**Lisa:** Soon as we get back we're working on new songs. We're really excited about that. Maybe we can have that out next spring.

Matt HIAMB: So Warped Tour then another album. Producer picked?

Laura: We don't know. Most likely it's gonna be either Ryan Greene again

OR Bill Stevenson.

Matt HIAMB: Bill Stevenson!

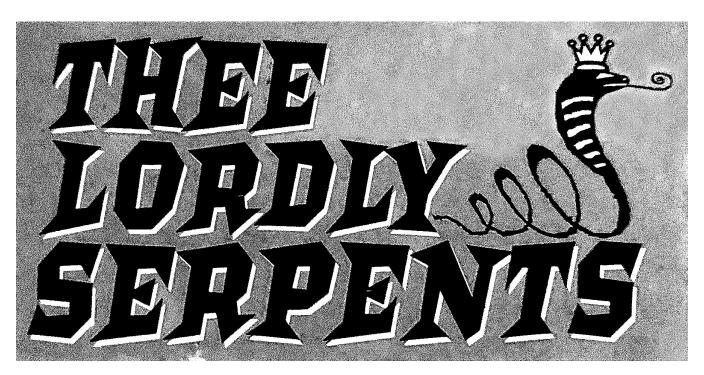
**Gel:** That's what we were thinking and well, he's also close to us. And he had actually talked to us before we did *Sealed With a Kiss* about doing that album, and then uh, was I telling you about Joe Queer? No, that was that someone else. 'Cause Joe wanted us to go on tour with The Queers in May, which I don't think we're going to be able to do [editor's note: they did!], but he also said he wanted to produce our next record—him & JJ Rassler, so they wanna do it.

Matt HIAMB: Well, good luck with everything and thanks.

Gel: Thank you!

Laura: Thank you and good luck to you guys.





To you, dear reader,

It gives me great pleasure to write to you today by way of introducing this piece on those splendid lads Thee Lordly Serpents. I must admit, however, that it was with much trepidation that I even granted the interview at all. When a certain south side boob, calling himself "Kopper" (sic), called me to ask if he might be allowed to speak with the boys, I of course answered, "Most certainly NOT." The mere fact that these bloodthirsty and incestuous music journalists continuously call on me to introduce them to the genius that is Thee Lordly Serpents is certainly no surprise, but why they consider the converted masses to be so painfully ignorant and feeble-minded is beyond me. They are, after all, preaching to the choir. All one really needs to do is to raise their glass, tip their hat, give the boys a hearty pat-onthe-back and, perhaps, enter into a boisterous rendition of "For These Are Jolly Good Fellows!" Need we belabor the obvious point that the boys are the most important thing to hit this sleepy riverside town in over forty years? But, after much soul searching, however, and a background check into this "Kopper's" credentials, I relented, permitting the interview at the very last possible minute. Apparently the boys in the band actually know this fellow, and who am I to criticize them for the company they keep? After all, these extemporal musicians have become media darlings and, indeed, pop music kings, not to mention household names, within the past year. And furthermore, they have heroically focused the media spotlight not only on themselves but on the entire music community that they have almost singlehandedly given birth to! For you see, they are so much more than the musical demigods that they at first appear to be. They are entertainers, artistes, showmen and benefactors of the first order!! How it took the rest of the

world so long to finally take notice is anyone's guess. For as much as they have been ignored by the press, dare I say, PUSHED ASIDE, for lo these many years, they have been rocking even harder, raising the bar and encouraging all of their imitators. The results of their labors are finally paying off and the lads have indeed secured for themselves a place at the top of the rock'n'roll alter. The musical pundits are finally finding out and the media is being forced to come to terms with their own banal insecurities and admit what the legions of loyal followers have known all along: These guys fuckin' rock!

Cheers, Sir Harry Stamen, M.B.E.

Interview by Kopper.

HIAMB: Who are you and what d'ya do?

Roger Cottonmouth: I'm Roger and I play the drum set.

Mick Viper: Mick, guitar.

Johnny Venom: I'm Johnny, I play bass and sing. HIAMB: When did you guys originally start playing together?

**Mick:** Well, Johnny and I started playing together in '83 or '84, back when we were in college at KU in Lawrence, Kansas. That was our first band, Pontius Pilate and the Naildrivers. We formed that band while hanging out in a bar, then we immediately went to some guy's house, recorded a song, then took it to a radio station and somehow got it played on KJHK, all in the span of about 45 minutes. (Laughs.) That was pretty amazing. It was like, let's start a band, go back and record, and walk it up to the radio station and it worked! The song got played on the air within like ten minutes.

HIAMB: KJHK in the '80s was so much fun to listen to. Unpredictable. What kind of music was it, by the way? Johnny: Punk rock.

**Mick:** Yeah, punk. It was like, total straightforward punk rock.

Johnny: I was the drummer. Pretty minimalistic drumbeat. HIAMB: So when did you guys hook up with Roger, then?

**Roger:** I didn't enter the picture until December of '94. **Johnny:** Yeah, Roger had already toured the world before that. He was a seasoned rock'n'roll veteran.

Roger: I'd been playing with bands since '82. A couple of cover bands... my first band was in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, in '82, then I played in a couple of bands in Springfield, Missouri, kinda power pop, post-New Wave kinda bands. Then I moved to California in '86, played with a band called Vulgar and the Woodcutter in the San Francisco area starting in '87, and then moved to L.A. with them in '89, and we were workin' on a deal with Geffen that basically fell through in the 11th hour. And after that I joined the Tommyknockers in '91 and played with the world-famous Rich Coffee for three years. We did two European tours, went to Mexico City and played down there, and we were working on a Japanese and Australian tour but I ended up leaving the band. We had an album released on Unique Records out of Düsseldorf, Germany, which also had the Prime Movers, the Wylde Mammoths, and I think the guy that ran that label also put out a couple of releases by the Milkshakes. The last Tommyknockers release was on Helter Skelter in '94 and we didn't get to tour for that one. After that I left the band and moved back to St. Louis in October of '94.

### HIAMB: What happened with the Tommyknockers? Did you guys just break up?

Roger: Well, the bass player, Laura, finally quit. She was originally in the Screamin' Sirens, and Rich got Melanie (who's now the singer for the Excessories) to replace her. That was back before they were married. And so then I quit and I suggested they get Mike Czekaj, who had been playing with the Fuzztones, to replace me, and he joined, and at that point they changed their name to the Alter Egos and released an album on the Japanese label, 1+2 Records.

HIAMB: So, you were originally from Missouri, then?
Roger: Well, I was born up in Detroit rock city, but moved to
Poplar Bluff, where my father was originally from, when I
was about five, and grew up there. But after the
Tommyknockers broke up I moved to St. Louis.

HIAMB: Back when you were living and playing in Springfield were you familiar with any other garage bands down there like the Skeletons or the Royal Nonesuch?

**Roger:** I ended up in Springfield after a short stint in Denver, and knew lots of local bands. The Royal Nonesuch

didn't start until later, like around '85, but yeah, I knew John Marshall and Walt Ressmeyer. Met them at a party. They were a great band!

HIAMB: Yeah, they're still around, too. They just played their first show in something like 12 years. I'm hoping they make it up to St. Louis soon.

**Roger:** Yeah, that'd be really cool. I'd love to see those guys again!

HIAMB: How did you get connected with these two? Roger: They'd placed an ad in *Spotlight* magazine, looking for a drummer.

**Mick:** Yeah, Johnny and I were in the Black Dahlia at the time. That was with Johnny's brother singing and playing bass, and Johnny played guitar, and we canned the drummer and put an ad in the paper, and Roger showed up in leopard skin pants and that was it! (Laughs.) Then later, after I'd left, moved to Kansas City and then came back, we changed to a three-piece. Johnny moved to bass when we fired his brother.



HIAMB: So at what point did you guys become the Serpents?

Roger: It was August of '96 when we decided to start playing again as a three-piece while Mick was still living in Kansas City—he was driving in from KC just so he could play with us cuz we couldn't find anyone else to complete the band. Johnny and I tried to find some people but it never really worked out. We were still playing as the Black Dahlia as a three-piece for a short time.

**Mick:** Right. I think our first show was when we played at the old Cicero's basement bar as the three-piece Black Dahlia.

**Johnny:** Yeah, I had this Crate amp, and I was playing distortion through the Crate.

**Roger:** And I think we changed our name in '97. We were seeing records by Blag Dahlia, the guy from the Dwarves, and we figured if we kept it we'd have to change it eventually anyway.

**Mick:** Yeah, we just wanted to break away from the whole Black Dahlia thing anyway, so...

Johnny: Roger had a dream...

**Mick:** That's right! Roger had a dream...

**Johnny:** He woke up in a garden and a serpent told him to change our name. (Laughs.)

**Roger:** Actually I was reading a book called *The Mayan Prophecies* and there were several names given to Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, and one of them was the Serpent Lord. And I thought, "Hey! That sounds like something we could use in our band!" (Laughs.)



HIAMB: Did you guys like the name he'd come up with? Roger: Nah, there was resistance at first.

Mick: Yeah, not at first.

Johnny: I thought it sounded too much like the Kingly

Penises. (Laughs.)

**Mick:** Yeah, I kinda thought it sounded a bit heavy metal-ish at first. The whole phallic thing, the whole symbology of, uh, ya know, a god-like penis... and then Roger explained the whole mythology behind it to me and I was like, "that sounds perfect."

HIAMB: You guys seemed to have started playing quite a few shows then after you had the new name, and then you disappeared for a while...

**Roger:** Yeah, it was real sporadic. It's cuz everybody's got a lot of commitments outside the band so we approach it almost like a hobby just because it's gotta be done in our

spare time and we've taken lots of baby hiatuses and stuff like that, so we've been extremely sporadic over the years. **HIAMB: Yeah, you guys kinda completely disappeared** 

from the radar screen there for about a year, I guess? Mick: Yeah.

Johnny: It was an agreed-to hiatus.

**Roger:** Yeah, that was due to our meltdown in Iowa City. Jeff Hess (The Geargrinders) was playing organ with us, and for whatever reason it just didn't work out. And we just decided to take some time off, then regroup later.

HIAMB: Do you think you'll try adding keys again? Mick: Probably not, I mean, we kinda realized we had a good sound and why mess with it? Plus, we had kinda a bad place to practice at that time, too. And in that period when we were not playing out we were spending our time building the recording studio.

HIAMB: Tell me more about that. Is it finished?

**Mick:** The studio isn't finished and isn't really close to being finished, but it is working. It's really nothing special. It's a room with a recorder, mixing board and a bunch of microphones. I also haven't built a separate control room yet. Don't really need it now but it won't be a complete studio until that's done.

HIAMB: Is this something you'd like to build to record some other local bands, too?

**Mick:** Definitely. I really like what Matt Bug has and sort of want to pattern this in that direction. Get in bands that I really like and work on music. I've had some email chats with Cullen from the Honkeys so I'm hoping to do something with them soon.

HIAMB: So the only thing you guys have ever released, up to this point, are the two tracks that were included on the *Landlocked & Loaded* comp, right?

**Roger:** That's it. We've never released anything else. **Mick:** We've had at least three or four recording sessions, and we were never really happy with what we got out of them.

Roger: Most of our recording sessions, as I remember it, were to provide songs for the Point (local radio station KPNT) for their Pointessential compilation CDs. We did that like, three times, and, of course, we were rejected every time. They would have nothing to do with us, I guess, which is, I guess, something to be thankful for.

HIAMB: Well, let's back up. When you guys first started playing around '94, were there any other bands on the local scene playing garage, because you guys obviously now have that big '60s influence goin' on. Johnny: No, not at all.

**HIAMB:** Do you think that was the problem, then, in not getting any response from the Point?

Roger: Well, maybe, but the stuff that we were giving to them didn't sound so '60s, I don't think. I mean, we had the influence, but our sound now is much more '60s sounding

than it was at that time. At that time it was more of just like a mainstream rock sound.

**Johnny:** I think when we went to a three-piece it bacame more garage-sounding.

Roger: Yeah, and our songwriting definitely became more British Invasion-oriented, but played heavier.

**Mick:** It was always in the mix, but it wasn't as prominent. **Johnny:** I think that was part of the idea when we got back together that that was what we were gonna do.

Roger: Yeah, for some reason we always looked and acted like we were in a '60s garage band, but we didn't really sound like it.

HIAMB: What other neo-garage bands out on the scene, either in the '80s or '90s, were you fans of?

Roger: My favorite band is the Miracle Workers. That, to me, is the band I'd wanna be in, ya know. And the Fuzztones... I knew we were never gonna sound like that, because we just didn't have that, but if we were ever gonna be lumped in with other bands that's definitely who I'd wanna be in company with.

**Mick:** I actually didn't like garage rock back then.

**Johnny:** I did. I kept playing it and Mick's like "oh, ya know, whatever..."

Mick: Yeah. I was like. not really into it.

**Johnny:** I just have this simple mind, ya know. Simple

chords, simple stuff that works good for me.

HIAMB (to Mick): What were you more inclined to wanna play?

Johnny: Psychedelia.

Mick: Yeah. The psychedelic stuff, both the '60s psych stuff

and also, like, that period in the early '90s... **Roger:** You liked the shoegazer stuff a lot.

Mick: Yeah, the shoegazer/dreampop stuff was, to me,

areat.

**Roger:** And he doesn't even smoke pot!

Mick: Ya know, like the Jesus & Mary Chain, Ride, My Bloody Valentine, Galaxy 500, all those British/Manchester bands. Still love that stuff.

HIAMB: What do you think has been your biggest stumbling block for the band as far as gaining a bigger audience, or moving forward, or recording, and so on? **Johnny:** I don't think we've had any stumbling blocks, it's

just we're doin' what we feel like doin'. I don't see it as we're

any further behind than we wanna be.

**Mick:** Yeah, exactly. We've even talked about, ya know, god forbid we ever got signed! We'd have to turn 'em down, ya know. We couldn't do that. We couldn't tour or anything like that.

**Johnny:** It's just like this little club we have, ya know? Our wives let out on Thursday nights and we play music, and drink beer, and eat pizza, and...

**Mick:** Cuss and spit...

**Johnny:** And every now and then we go out and we have a show. And that's great. That's how we like it.



**Mick:** I think we've been pretty lucky that we can pretty much do what we wanna do, ya know? We're not even trying, actually.

Johnny: We have this uncanny ability to hook up with outof-town bands and go play other places. I've talked to other bands in town and they never play outside of St. Louis. Roger: Yeah, they seem really dumbfounded on how to play out-of-town, and we get all these gigs that just drop

into our laps, basically. That's just because we make connections with bands that come into town. Basically our strategy has been to always open for other people. The last thing I wanna do is headline a show. First of all we have no draw so we don't wanna do that.

**Johnny:** You don't have to print that! (Laughs.) HIAMB: Well why do you think that is?

Roger: Because we're not scenesters. We don't hang out on the scene, and we don't have a bunch of college-age friends that go out and hang out in the bars all the time. That's the big problem. That's really the biggest problem. We're not in that age group, so...

HIAMB: How old are you guys?

Roger: I'm 41. Mick: 39. Johnny: 40.

Mick: We're all pretty old.

**Johnny:** Yeah, you don't have to print that, either! (More

laughs.)

**Roger:** That's fine, I mean, the line between young and old in rock'n'roll is getting more and more blurred...

HIAMB: Well, I think that's important, though, because it helps dispel the myth that there isn't an age limit to rocking...

**Johnny:** The determination grows with age, anyway. I mean, it might be a bit harder to do it, but I'm much more determined to do it now.

**Mick:** Well, like Guided By Voices, I mean, to me they're like one of the greatest bands to come around in the past few years, and that guy's like 45, ya know?

**Johnny:** There's a certain stamina that comes with age, anyway. Ya know, ya really don't have stamina, but you make up for it by not giving in. A kid will just say, "fuck, I'm tired. I quit."

HIAMB: So you guys never really ever lost your determination over the years? You never got tired of it? Johnny: Well, ya know, you do, but you take a break for a few months and then you're like, fuck, I can't stand it anymore. I think that's one thing we'd all agree on is that when we're tired of it we won't do it anymore, but to get together and play once in a while is great, ya know? I'm havin' a great time.

Roger: Speaking for myself, I don't have a choice. I mean, I'd lose my mind. I'd go insane and kill myself if I couldn't play because ever since I was 20 years old I've never had any other concept of my own identity other than to be a drummer in a band. It's just what I am. I'm a drummer in a band. That's just what I do. I mean, I have a job, but it's just a day job. I'm still in that stage. I'm 41 years old and I have a wife, a kid, and a mortgage, but I'm still a guy workin' a day job and playing in a band. (Laughs.)

**Johnny:** That's cool. That's a beautiful thing.

Roger: Yeah, that hasn't changed yet, ya know? In periods when we've been down and on hiatus or whatever it drives me crazy. The last time I went to L.A., in '98, the Tommyknockers played two shows and I had like 10 bands tryin' to get me to move back out there. And when I came back to St. Louis I was certain I was going to move back. And then I ended up meeting my wife and I didn't make it. So I'm still here now, but I'm trying to make the best of it. And I've always been impressed with just the amount of musicians and the kinda scene that's been in St. Louis the last seven years or so. There just seems to be a lot of support for local bands. For example, when I first moved here, I mean, say what you will about the Point, I mean they're not my favorite radio station and I don't even like it at all anymore, but when I first moved here they actually played local bands on the radio. I'm tellin' ya, in L.A., a place that's full of bands, that's unheard of! Unsigned bands do not get played at all, ever, on any radio in Los Angeles. It just doesn't happen. And that impressed the hell out of me. The fact that they put out records that sold out with nothing but local bands on 'em, on a regular basis. I mean, maybe I

didn't agree with all the music they chose for it or whatever but that's not the point. The point is somebody was trying to push the local music scene, and they were trying to push the festival they were trying to have there for a few years. And in a city the size of St. Louis that's just amazing that something like that was going on. And I do see right now there seems to be a real resurgence in interest in garage music in this town and there seems to be a lot of new fans flocking to this music, and I've said this before, what we need are more good bands and it would really bust this scene wide open because I think a lot of people would really dig this music if they got exposed to it.

HIAMB: Do you guys play out of town a lot?

**Roger:** Actually, we used to play more out-of-town shows than we did here. Which is good.

Johnny: It's about 50/50, actually...

**Mick:** Yeah, we've played in Kansas City, Des Moines, Iowa City. Bloomington...

**Roger:** A lot of the bands we used to play with are gone now... the Bent Scepters, Dragstrip, the Delstars.

**Mick:** And our next show is gonna be in Chicago, probably, with the Mushuganas.

**Roger:** I'm going back to L.A. sometime this summer to play some Tommyknockers reunion shows.

HIAMB: What's your guys favorite brands of gear to play with?

Mick: That would be Vox.

**Johnny:** Vox, yeah. Rickenbacker, Danelectro. **Mick:** Drum-wise what've we got, a Ludwig?

**Roger:** I've always been a Ludwig man, for twenty years... **Mick:** We've got a lot of old, like, '60s effects and stuff, old weird fuzz boxes and stuff.

**Johnny:** I don't think I could bring myself to play a Fender. I just couldn't play a Fender.

HIAMB: What are some of your favorite current bands, either local or otherwise?

Johnny: I think Tomorrow's Caveman are pretty awesome.

Mick: Knuckel Drager.

At this point the tape stopped. Whoops. THE END.



# CAVESTOMP: 2001 NEW YORK CITY

#### BY KØPPER

I'd been wanting to attend Cavestomp for quite a few years, ever since I first read the accounts of the amazing? and the Mysterians and the Shadows of Knight performances at Cavestomp '97. For those of you who may not be aware, Cavestomp, the garage rock "festacular" held annually in New York City, has showcased such legendary '60s groups as the the Pretty Things, the Monks, the Standells, as well as such great bands as the Swingin' Neckbreakers, the Chesterfield Kings, the Makers, the Insomniacs, the Brood, the Fuzztones, the Mooney Suzuki, the Hate Bombs, the 5.6.7.8's, the Fleshtones, Lyres, and more. After only being able to really afford to go to one garage fest a year, and having already attended the memorable Las Vegas Grind in 2000, there were just no funds

WAPSAW AT THE POLISH 261 DRIDGS AVE. WILLIAMBRIDGE BROOKLYN
L TRAIN TO BEDFORD AVENUE OR G TRAIN TO NASSAU LITTLE STEVEN & CAVESTOMP! RECORDS PRESENT DON'T MISS THIS FINAL! FUZZED OUT! FAREWELL! CAVESTOMP! FESTACULAR! SAT NOV 3 DOORS 7PM SHOW 8PM SHARP! ONLY \$20 THE BUFF MEDWAYS THE WAISTCOATS WILDEBEESTS SUN NOV 4 DOORS 7PM SHOW 8PM SHARP! ONLY \$20 LOS STRAITJACKETS WITH BIG SANDY SATURN V FEAT. ORBIT HOSTED BY WORLD FAMOUS ORCHESTRA LEADER PETER ZAREMBA OF THE FLESHTONES DRESS CASUAL - DJ'S - LIGHT SHOWS - STRANGE VIDEO/FILMS - SPONSOR BOOTHS \$3 BOTTLED BEER

left to be able to make it to that year's Stomp. So I made a promise to myself to not miss it the next time, and despite almost calling off the plans to go due to the tragedies of September 11, my wife and I agreed to "not let the terrorists win" and stick to our original plans.

We found one of our friends who was willing to make the drive with us, Tim Sullivan. And yeah, that's right, I said "drive." I have to admit I was still a little freaked out at the thought of flying, and dealing with the inherited heightened security and who knows what other dangers—real or imagined—from flying. So, I just felt a helluva lot better about making it a road trip instead. Plus, this way we'd get to see some of the countryside and, hey, it was cheaper! Not much, but we definitely saved money. We rented a 2002 Chrysler Sebring, which was a pretty damned nice car and a helluva better ride than the piece-o-shit Daewoo that the guy at Dollar Rent A Car first tried to give us. The Daewoo not only reeked of stale cigar smoke, but had one really bad alignment problem. We would've been fighting to keep it on the road the entire trip. It was also uncomfortably small for three grown adults. When my wife saw the car, she was not having it. Literally. And set off inside the office to set the guy straight and came back smiling with the keys to the Sebring. Nice.

So, the plan was to leave early in the morning on Thursday Nov. 1, drive all day (the three of us taking turns behind the wheel, naturally), and arrive at our destination in NYC late that night. That way we'd have all day Friday to do some urban exploration, then focus our attention on Cavestomp and the WFMU Record Fair on Saturday and Sunday, play tourists some more on Monday, and then do another full day's driving back to St. Louis on Tuesday.

The 16-hour drive there included at least an hour (maybe two?) of driving around unknown and rarely explored wilds of Brooklyn as we struggled to locate our "bed and breakfast," the Greenpoint YMCA (hey, it's fun to stay at the YMCA!). It was pretty surreal, really, driving through the Holland tunnel just as the Yanks were wrapping up game five of the World Series in their second consecutive dramatic comefrom-behind fashion to take the Series lead over the D-Backs to three games to two. The NYC cops we encountered at the checkpoint after exiting the tunnel were predictably elated and jovial and everyone was yelling "Go Yanks" and smiling ear-to-ear and shit. The feeling of joy and celebration in the air offered a stark contrast to the overall sadness everyone had been feeling both inside and outside New York



The Kaisers

since 9/11. And even though we're not big Yankees fans, we were genuinely happy for them and smiled back with thumbs up, and the good-natured vibes being exchanged with these rough and tumble cops gave us warm fuzzies about being there at this unique point in history. But those smiles quickly faded as we refocused to assume the task at hand of trying to locate the YMCA in Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn. The thing was, we knew it was on Meserole. Easy enough, right? What we DIDN'T know was that there were two Meseroles in



The Kaisers

Brooklyn! What the fuck? Yeah, and we found the WRONG ONE first, of course, and it happened to be around 1am. That was Meserole STREET, in, what I now have seemed to have figured out, is in East Williamsburg Brooklyn. We were looking for Meserole AVENUE, in Greenpoint. Sure, Meserole Ave. was just a couple of miles north, but driving around unfamiliar territory in the wee hours of the morning, asking directions (the locals seemed just as confused as we were, actually—or maybe they were just drunk) and venturing even further south into pretty rough 'hoods (Bedford-Stuy, anyone?) wasn't our idea of sightseeing, especially in the middle of the night. We were thoroughly exhausted and road-weary, and just wanted to find where we were going to crash for the night. Well, I don't remember exactly how we found it, but we did. It must've been 2 or 3am by then, who knows... it was late, and felt even later due to the harrowing experiences of being lost and white-knuckling it in the largest city in America.

The Greenpoint YMCA wasn't anything fancy, believe me. But it was cheap. No budget motels anywhere near NYC that we could find,

anyway. Staying at the Y probably saved us close to 50% off any other place we could've chosen, even if it meant that we had to share bathrooms with the other, um, "guests." And it was just a few short blocks from the Warsaw Theatre at the Polish National Home. But even though we chose to drive to NYC, we weren't too crazy about the prospect for fighting traffic and finding parking spots on a daily basis while we were there, so the first thing we did was find a parking spot less than a block from the YMCA where we could ditch the car until we were ready to split town for good on Tuesday. The Greenpoint neighborhood was pretty interesting, as one can imagine from a Polish neighborhood in NYC. We even met a few other Stompers staying at the Y, including Orbit, Ron Silva, and a few others from the Saturn V entourage from San Francisco, and a peculiar cat named Jim Vincent from Denver (who was, I found out, a former member of the Down-N-Outs). Jim turned out to be a good companion for the weekend, accompanying us on our frequent subway jaunts into Manhattan.

I won't bore you with our extended tales of playing tourists in New York City, of getting lost on, but eventually getting very accustomed to, the NYC subway system, of hanging out with Bomp-list pals at Odessa and Manitoba's on Friday night, of taking the ferry out past the Statue of Liberty to Staten Island, of walking to CBGBs and standing beneath the scaffolding to get my picture taken, of



The Creation

bumping into Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker at some vintage clothing store in the Village, of drinking pints of beer at McSorley's, the oldest continuously operating pub in America, of finding the corner of

Marie Formatale Dave design of the Parties of the P

MARK LINDSAY
and
THE CAVESTOMP REDCOATS

53rd & 3rd for another photo op (don't it make ya feel sick?!), of accidentally finding (but not patronizing) the original "Coyote Ugly" bar that the ridiculous movie was based on, of trying to find at least ONE copy of the newly released Cripplers CD at just about every record store we could find, or of visiting the horrific scene (and breathing the stench-filled air) of "ground zero" where the WTC towers stood less than two months before. No, that would take far too much space and I'd really like to cut to the chase and get to the real purpose for us going to New York in the first place, Cavestomp! Whew...

The event was held at The Warsaw theater in the Polish National Home in Greenpoint Brooklyn. What a great venue! Basically an old-fashioned ballroom with a great raised stage with plenty of room for the bands to perform, and lots of room for the Stompers to crowd up in front of. It even offered some seating in the small balcony upstairs, for "resting one's aching Chelsea-booted dogs" I heard someone say. The stage was at just the right height to give everyone a pretty damned good view no matter where you were standing. The large

room also made the crazy psychedelic light show even more spectacular than it would've been at a smaller venue, complete with multicolored oil blobs, various slide show images, vintage films being shown on the side walls, etc. Good food (ya had your choice of pizza or pierogies) was provided in the merch area, along with scores of vendors selling an incredibly cool selection of vinyl, CDs, t-shirts, and more. The staff was relaxed and helpful, a far cry from some of the folks at the V.U. The only problem was the locale—the place was just a ways off the beaten path, a loooong walk from the nearest L train, cutting through some rough-looking industrial streets and McCarren Park.

But perhaps the remoteness was a blessing—unlike the 2 a.m. cut-off time at the Westbeth, there didn't seem to be a noise curfew here, meaning the bands could stretch out their sets indefinitely—which most of them did! Even some of the "opening acts" went on for an hour or so, allowing them to pack their performances with lots of choice material. But not the CS Battle of the Bands winners, the Priests. About midway into just the third song of their set, the drummer broke BOTH of his sticks (which I understand were lent to him by the drummer of the Waistcoats!), and no other pair was forthcoming, so he got up and walked off the stage, leaving his bandmates standing there playing without him. AWKWARD. Imagine—your NYC debut and you don't bring



The Buff Medways

at least one extra set of drum sticks. They learned a valuable lesson in preparedness. The sunglasses-wearing Waistcoats saved the day, though, with an excellent set of garagey R&B—my personal fave set of the night!

The Buff Medways were next—I like them well enough, but not as much as Thee Headcoats. Maybe in time they'll grow on me. Decent set, though, and Billy sounded great and the band was very warmly received. The



The Creation

Downliners Sect were kinda disappointing, nearly turning the event into the Boogie Rock Festacular. But the Electric Prunes made up for that in spades. I'd been warned that their appearance at the Vox convention earlier this year in CA included very little classic material, but you wouldn't have guessed that by their performance here. James' son played keyboards, and looked very much like his father did back in the day-groovyghostly! Some of the "extended jam" parts of the songs went on a little too long (go easy on the prune juice, guys), but the magic and skill permeating their treatment of "Too Much to Dream" made it all worthwhile. The guitarist totally nailed the oscillating backwards fuzz riff by which all oscillating backwards fuzz riffs must be judged, and it sounded incredible live! Not to mention that tingly brrrring strum that immediately follows it. Normally when Cavestomp "old timers" play their biggest hit twice in their sets I get all cheesed out (except for Richard & the Young Lions' "Open Up Your Door," of course), but I was really hoping for the Prunes to do "Dream" at their conclusion. No such luck.

Sunday night was probably the best night of all and was the perfect culmination of an incredibly fun festival. The Saturn V featuring Orbit kicked things off and were good enough, but they were much better on Friday night when they played a really rockin' set of frat rock at Manitoba's bar in Manhattan. Los Straitjackets delivered what they do best and were accompanied on stage by Big Sandy, which was pretty cool, and the go-go dancing of NYC's burlesque queens, the Pontani Sisters, added to the fun, party vibe. Mark Lindsay also joined in on a great version of "Treat Her Right," before he and his Redcoats took the stage to rock our faces off with the best set of the night thus far. But the next two sets after that were simply astounding. The Kaisers and their Beatles-Live-at-the-Cavern beat garage caused the crowd to go bonkers, and then the Creation with their mod-meets-punk completed the sweaty affair. Biff Bang POW! They were incredible, and so much more POW-erful than on record. Tony Barber of the Buzzcocks even filled in on bass, adding to the punked-up appeal.

Post-Cavestomp thoughts: Kudos to Alyssa, Jon, Little Steven, and everyone else involved in the organization of the CS! 2001 fest. My wife and I had a wonderful time and enjoyed every band. Favorites? The Waistcoats, The Kaisers, and the Creation would have to be my top three with definitely a nod to the Buffs as well. It was great meeting up with PJ, Evan Davies, Blair, Linda, Karen & Ron, Orbit, Dennis, and anyone else I'm forgetting to mention.

Now, that said, I have some complaints, too. Granted, these are pretty minor considering the grand scope of the event, and all of them combined wouldn't even come close to us regretting or second-guessing our decision to go.

First, it didn't seem to me like the Cavestomp organizers were very up-front with making announcements regarding band cancellations. True, maybe they were very damned busy, but this is an important part of an event (the bands playing, obviously). Posted lineups would change but no explanation was offered as to (first) why the

Satelliters had dropped off the bill, and later when the Wildebeests mysteriously disappeared from the lineup. Hey, I understand bands cancelling and whatnot, but no mention was made that brought any of this to anyone's attention. Again, I'm not trying to imply that I think anyone was trying to pull a fast one, but I just think if you're going to be straight with your fans (and in this case, potential customers), you should let them know the latest news regarding the festival. If a band has dropped off, make an announcement to that effect. Just don't update the band list with no explanation.

A couple questions: Where were the \$3 beers that are still mentioned at the Cavestomp website? What happened to the free posters and t-shirts (also mentioned on the site)?

Electric Prunes

Bah! Whatever. Great time.



There are a lot of two-member bands out there. Not all of these duos are good. Some of them are even overrated. But here comes one you ought to pay attention to: out of the bowels of Detroit—by way of Cincinnati—come The Soledad Brothers, two righteous souls out to blow your mind with their brand of twisted country blues 'n' roll! They've got a disc out on Estrus with a new one on the way, possibly out by the time you read this. This interview took place on November 9 at a Greek restaurant in Bloomington, Indiana, shortly before the Brothers took the stage to spread their gospel at the Cellar Lounge.

Interview by The Noise Junkie (Brian Marshall) from *Noises From the Garage* 'zine.

HIAMB: Noise Junkie JW: Johnny Walker BS: Ben Swank, Esq.

**HIAMB:** So, introduce yourselves and say what you do. **JW:** I'm Johnny Walker and I play the vibraphone.

**BS:** I'm Ben Swank, Esquire. I play the drums and the concertina.

**HIAMB:** So, how long have you been at this now?

**JW:** I've been playing since I was 18, which makes it a long time. I've been playing with Ben about eight years.

**BS:** We played together in another band called Henry and June, which was a four-piece that broke up. We just kind of went on playing together.

**HIAMB:** You had a 7" on Human Fly, right? **BS:** Yeah.

**HIAMB:** How did Estrus get interested? **JW:** They sent us a postcard. (Laughs.)

**BS:** We just did a single on Italy Records and they were distributing Italy's stuff and heard it and asked us if we wanted to do something.

**HIAMB:** John, you were telling me you didn't like the album you put out...

JW: Yeah, it's a piece of crap. (Laughter.)

**HIAMB:** Why do you say that?

JW: I don't know. It's just that the songwriting's sub-par, the vocals are adequate at best. The drumming sucks mud through a straw

**BS:** I think it's a good record. (Laughter.) I think Johnny's just full of something.

JW: Okay, I'm full of shit. (Laughter.)

**BS:** No, it's a good record.

**HIAMB:** I think so, too. I think it's got some very good songwriting on it

**JW:** I don't think it always has to be about songwriting necessarily. I think it's more about conveying an emotion.

BS: I think it does that pretty well.

**JW**: It's an emotive farce. (Laughter.) **BS**: This is the first I've heard of that. (More laughs.)

**JW:** The new record's really good, however. There's all kinds of fine stuff on the new record.

**HIAMB:** When did you record this new record?

**JW:** During the riots in Cincinnati last spring. We kinda like slept in the studio on the floor. We did two of the tracks about two years ago.

**BS:** About two years ago? More like one year ago.

JW: Last winter.

**BS:** But the rest of the album we did last spring.

HIAMB: What's the new album going to be called? Do you have a title yet?

JW: Steal Your Soul and Dare Your Spirit to Move. Tampa Red, an old blues guy, had a song called "Steal Your Soul and Dare Your Spirit to Move."

(Attention shifts to a particularly obnoxious group of office girls at another table.)

**HIAMB:** How did you get (former MC5 manager) John Sinclair to do the liner notes for your first album?

JW: We smoked him down. (Laughs.)

**BS:** We played with him in Cleveland, and...

JW: We backed him up.

BS: Yeah, we backed him up.

**JW:** He does a spoken word thing now. He does blues stories.

**BS:** Johnny gave him a ride to Ann Arbor, so we stopped at my house in Toledo and hung out. He brought us down to New Orleans a few months later for Mardi Gras and we just asked him and he was happy to do it. He's a real big fan of blues and jazz.

**JW:** He has good taste as well. **BS:** Yeah, he's a real good guy.

**HIAMB:** You seem to be big blues and jazz fans yourselves.

**JW:** Uh, well, that's not entirely true.

**BS:** (To Johnny) It seems to be more true of you. I just listen to a lot of everything. Johnny's main diet definitely is blues and jazz.

JW: I grew up getting into punk, though.

**HIAMB:** Who are some of your favorite blues people?

**JW:** That's a tough question. That's like asking someone if they have a favorite love. You like every one of them. (Pause.) I've been listening to a lot of Memphis Slim lately. I think I've got lke and Tina on my record player at home right now. Fred McDowell, Dr. Ross.—I love Dr. Ross—I like Slim Harpo a lot, too.

BS: I love Slim Harpo...

JW: I've been listening to a lot of Skip James, too.

**BS:** He has my favorite voice. He has the best blues voice.



**HIAMB:** How about Hound Dog Taylor? I know you covered him on the album. **JW:** Yeah, we love Hound Dog Taylor.

**HIAMB:** He's one of my favorites. **JW:** Yeah, you can't beat a guy with six

fingers.

**BS**: He's a freak of nature. **JW**: It's a sign of inbreeding.

(Laughter.)

**BS:** Which also makes for good blues. (More laughs.)

**HIAMB:** I was wondering how you came up with the song "The Weight of the World." It sounds like gospel preaching.

JW: I got books of that shit at home. I sit down and write lyrics like that. As far as words go, I got books full of stuff like that at home. I guess I missed my calling.

**BS:** It was just an instrumental thing we did, kind of screwing around. Johnny came back and wrote some stuff

for it.

**JW:** It's more or less just a piss-take. Jack White wanted us to do a song that sounded like a Gories song. And that's what we came up with.

**BS:** And it sounds nothing like a Gories song! (Laughter.) **JW:** That's for sure. It's a song that wrote itself on the spot.

**HIAMB:** Is there anything like that on the new album? **BS:** I don't think so...

**JW:** No real Bassholes-type stuff. It's more songwriting oriented and a bit more blues-wise. There's lots of fucked-up percussion on it. It's a bit more thought out of a record. There's nothing like that on there. We may save it for the third record. (Laughter.) The third record's going to be ALL noise. It will be our "Metal Machine Music" record.

**HIAMB:** Did Jack White do recording on this new record, too?

JW and BS: Yeah.

BS: We only did two with Jack on this one.

JW: He's been kind of busy lately.

**BS:** (Looking around) There's a lot of drunk chicks in here.

JW: I know. And they're not even cute!

**BS:** They're office-grown chicks. (Laughter.) They just got done at the financial firm. (Loud laughter.)

**HIAMB:** Figuratively and literally. (More laughter.)

And that was it! Many thanks go to Brian Marshall for contributing this interview. Be sure to check out his 'zine, *Noises From the Garage*. If you'd like to check out the lowdown, dirty, bluesdrenched punk raunch of the Soledad Brothers, pick up their debut LP on Estrus Records at Estrus.com, or write to them at: Soledad Brothers, 364 Sumner, Toledo, OH 43609.

#### ESSENTIAL SHIT LIST ENTRY BY DOC

Ciccone Youth - The Whitey Album (DGC, 1988)

For the unlucky few who never picked up on the joke, Ciccone Youth was, in fact, Sonic Youth jamming(?) with a few of their friends. The Youth have paid homage to Madonna Ciccone (yes, that's her last name) a few times over the years: "Expressway to Yr. Skull" off of EVOL carried the alternate title "Madonna, Sean, and I," and "Kool Thing" off of Goo was all about Ms. M's, uh, "koolness." However, what started out as a shared single with Mike Watt of The Minutemen and Greg Ginn of Black Flag covering "Burning Up" on one side and Sonic Youth deconstructing "Into the Groove" on the other, the project quickly turned into an album full of brilliant satire and dissonance. Whitey is chock full of experimental goodies; the three finest moments are easily Watt's solo version of "Burning Up," Kim Gordon's cover of Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love," and, of course, "Into the Groove(y)", which includes samples of Madonna's original



vocals and beats. Recorded around the same time as their punk masterpiece Daydream Nation, The Whitey Album captured Sonic Youth at the top of their game. So be a honkey and go out and buy it, fool. (Note: Pick up the DGC reissue over the original on SST – it sounds better and includes liner notes by Mike Watt.) -Doc

**Supersuckers** - *Songs All Sound The Same* (eMpTy Records, 1992)

Personally, I didn't enjoy Sub Pop-era Supersuckers much, except for maybe Must've Been High (their "country" album) and La Mano Cornuda. Or maybe it's just that I didn't enjoy them as much as I did their Empty release, which just flat out ROCKS. Culled from early singles and some covers (including The Dead Boys' "What Love Is" and Nazareth's "Razamanaz"), Songs... features the Supersuckers doing what they do best. That is, slinging out 1-2-3-4, no-frills punk laced with more down home, fuzzed-out guitars and more songs about cars, liquor, and fucking than you could shake a stick at. But the best track on this disc features the boys ripping through Madonna's "Burning Up" like a combine through prairie dogs. Play the Watt/Ginn version and this one back-to-back; interesting how an unassuming little pop song



takes on a life of its own when other people get their hands on it, isn't it? Ironically, "Burning Up" contains one of my favorite verses from the '80s, and the Supersuckers' Eddie Spaghetti manages to capture the underlying desperation of the song way better than Ms. Ciccone when he rages:

"Would you like to see me down on my knees/Bend me over backwards now would you be pleased/I'm not like the others, I'll do anything/I'm not the same/I have no shame/I'm on fire."

Two albums, two Madonna covers, two classics. Own them. -Doc

# LAS VEGAS SHAKEDOWN 2001

by Tim Sullivan

Note: This is not a music review. It's just the story of our trip to Las Vegas for the Vegas Shakedown. Hopefully I can describe just how much fun it was and encourage people to attend this annual event and others like it! I might incorporate a few stories from Vegas Grind 2000, since it was held at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino, where the various Vegas Weekenders (Grind, Viva Las Vegas, and Shakedown) were traditionally held until last year when rowdiness, vandalism and subsequent damage resulted in this particular event losing its home. This year, the promoters booked it at the only place that would allow them to have it (so I hear), a lackluster theatre on the edge of town known as the Huntridge. And for the last 3 days of September this year, it was home.

Las Vegas Shakedown. What a weekend. I don't know where to begin, so I guess I'll just recount the drunken haze that was my wonderful, exhausting Shakedown experience.

The morning plane ride was fortunately uneventful (in light of recent events), and got us to the desert in the blink of an eye compared to the 26-hour drive to the Las Vegas Grind last year. Now the fun all started at the airport, when I asked the shuttle driver if she could take us to the Nevada Hotel. She stared blankly at us for a few moments, and said, "The Nevada Hotel? I haven't taken anyone there in five years!" After a painfully slow 20-minute ride there, it was pretty apparent why she hadn't: the place was a dump. One of the letters on the huge sign outside was hanging crooked. There were three bums milling around amidst the trash blowing by the hotel entrance. The shuttle pulled away, exposing the Greyhound station across the street, which explained everything—we were in the wrong part of town. The impression I gathered from the exterior alone told me that in our effort to find the closest hotel to the venue, we had chosen one of the shittiest in all of Las Vegas. But it gets better. As we stood there taking it all in, Cheryl, Dave, and I spotted Steve Marguis, who was meeting us there



with Hank "Caveman" VerPlank and Tim Hopmeier, who had driven all the way from St. Louis. Steve's very first words were, "There's no A/C anywhere in the building." Now, it was 99 degrees in Vegas, a rather "warm" welcome after 60 degree weather in STL. He went on to explain that you had to pry the elevator doors open by hand, which they had figured out after waiting for four minutes for the doors to open automatically. The floor numbers didn't illuminate. leaving you to "guess" which floor you were on. A woman on the elevator said, "Are you guys new here? Don't go out on the street after dark." The room décor was, as Tim put it, "straight outta Goodfellas," except that the paint was peeling off the walls, the wall mirror was warped, and there was... a "turd in the toilet." Steve said they needed to see no more, and that Hank and Tim had gone looking for other accommodations.

When they returned a few minutes later I suggested taking Hank's car and finding the Huntridge Theatre, and then taking the first decent place that came along. So the six of us and all of our luggage squeezed into the car, found the Huntridge, and agreed on the Econo Lodge about a half a mile away, the closest place we could find. It was important to be close because we didn't have the convenience and luxury of the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino, where Shakedown and the Grind were held until a few "bad apples" got too rowdy and did damage last year, ruining the great setup (hotel, casino AND festival venue all rolled into the same facility) that the Gold Coast offered. It was ideal because if you needed more beer or a break from the bands

for any reason, you could just go up to your room, which was, of course, in the same building as the stage. Therefore this year we wanted to get a place nearby because we knew we would be drinking and (being good civilians) didn't want to be driving back and forth to the venue, or paying for cabs all weekend. So here we've come all the way out to fabulous, glitzy Las Vegas, and find ourselves at the Econo Lodge on the edge of town. Nice. It was pink and had a pool not much bigger than a hot tub. The guy behind the desk turned out to be from STL, and alarmed us when he said that the terrorist who had flown the first plane into the WTC towers had stayed at this very same motel just 2 months earlier. But all of us were very relieved to have found a place we could call home for the next three days, and more importantly, we could sit down and crack open a beer.

We got settled in and rushed to the Huntridge as I was worried (as usual) that we were missing all the action. They hadn't been very clear as to what time it all started—I had heard 2:00, someone else heard 5:00. It was now 3:50. Pulling up to the Huntridge, I immediately thought of the "Rock Fight" from "Up in Smoke." There was the whole assortment of punks, greasers, hippies, rednecks, etc, all just hanging around. The will-call check-in was very unorganized, and already the 350lb bouncers were bullying people around: "We're not open yet, so get away from the door!!" But we got our Almighty Wristbands, being reminded repeatedly throughout the weekend not to take them off (you mean they're removable?), lest we be decapitated. burned at the stake, and forced to crawl home from Vegas through the sweltering desert, heads hung in shame, and thereby missing the show. We got the point.

We had about an hour 'til the first band started, so we did the obvious: crossed the street to the Circle K to stock up on beer. Looking at the beer pricelist, we thought "Wow, these are good prices on cases." But they turned out to be 18-packs. I think that's all they have in Vegas—18-packs. Anyway, we grabbed a couple of the Beast, and packed the cooler. None of us had eaten in quite awhile, and we figured that was the smart thing to do, so we tried what looked like a local fast-food-type taco joint directly across from the Huntridge. (Those who know Hank and I will understand that we were drawn in by the allure of the 60-cent taco sign.) We were the only non-Spanish-speaking people in the restaurant, but I was able to order three 60-cent tacos. These wonderful little mini-tacos were tasty and hot as fuck, and having a taste for hot foods (and being a glutton for punishment) I devoured all of them, and loved every minute of it. Looking up from my plate of fire, I noticed I wasn't the only one sweating profusely, and now we were REALLY ready for a beer. On the way out, I was impressed by the large collection of Mexican CDs this guy had for sale in the corner. He must have had 500 of them sprawled over 2 booths. But no time to check and see if he had "Menudo" featuring Ricky Martin—we were on a mission for cold beer and loud rock 'n roll.

We crossed the treacherous intersection back to the Huntridge parking lot, jumped in Hank's car, and cranked up the A/C. Hank and I downed our first two in about five minutes, which set the pace for the weekend. It was starting to hit us that the long-awaited rock 'n roll weekend was beginning. We wondered what it would be like inside—you know, the important questions: How much are beers, do they have imports, etc. Then someone said, "Who said they even have a bar?" For about ten minutes this was a real issue and a growing concern. "What? No bar?" I panicked. I mean, it goes against the laws of nature to have three days of rock 'n roll and no bar! Just then, Tim, who had gone in minutes earlier to check it out, returns with two videos in hand. (Tim sees money matters about the opposite of Hank and I—the "weekend" hadn't even started and Tim's already spent \$30.) He assured us that there was a bar, and said the festival was getting ready to start.

Only the lobby of the Huntridge reminds you that you're still in Vegas—the swirling orange carpeting is the same from which entire reptiles emerge in "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas." To the left of the small lobby a couple of vendors had set up merch tables selling all manners of rock 'n roll videos, shirts, etc. To the right, they were selling "refreshments"—fruits, nuts, bottled water, etc., which seemed odd to me, but fine. A door led out to the "patio" and the bar. Drafts were three bucks a pint, but at least there was a good selection. The patio wasn't much bigger than a large room, with a mural on one wall and a big BBQ spread opposite, but nice atmosphere nonetheless. Anyway, we could hear the bands starting, so it was on to the theatre.

The "theatre" was nothing but a large high school-style gymnasium without the bleachers or windows, and had become a matterless, black void except for the lights of the stage at the far end. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face in this place, unless you were by the stage. It was completely characterless compared to the Grind at the Gold Coast Casino. Of course the casino was nice to begin with, but it had been really done up—actually totally psyched out —for the Grind: again—swirl carpet, tie-dyed banners, props, bubble machines, go-go dancers, etc.

Anyway, the BRIEFS were good—energetic and tight. When they finished, Hank suggested going to the car for a beer (where they're cheaper) and we spent a large part of the weekend (maybe too much) there. We went back in to catch the last bit of the RICHMOND SLUTS, and I was kicking myself in the ass for missing most of their set. What I saw was right up my alley; they sounded and even looked like

mid-'70s-era Stones. I missed most of the EXCESSORIES because I was socializing. The SMUGGLERS were tight as usual. The EMBROOKS were decent. BOB LOG III never disappoints, and this was no exception. By the time the SWINGIN' NECKBREAKERS came on, the party was in full swing. A good turn-out had shown up and everyone was feelin' alright and shakin' it down. The SONS OF HERCULES kept it going but the crowd was winding down; they didn't even start until 1:30am. Like us, most people had traveled that day and were really feeling it. We'd had enough standing by that point (there were only a few chairs out on the patio, none anywhere else in the building) and decided to split. We'd have plenty more chances to see the last band, the HARD FEELINGS, some other time. We went to the motel and crashed hard.

Sat., feeling very refreshed, Cheryl, Dave, and I walked the 10 blocks to Fremont St. and hit the buffet. Ah, Vegas—overrun with buffets 24/7 for \$5 or \$6. Thoroughly bloated, we strolled Fremont St., then hopped on a bus just to get a look at the Strip. I'd seen it many times before, but it's amazing how each time there's so much new stuff—everyone trying to out-do everyone else.

We got back from our little "tour" and walked up to the Huntridge. Canada's EVAPORATORS had just started one of the most interesting, unique sets of the whole weekend. Their singer, who appears to be a real goofball (dude, don't you know Nardwuar the Human Serviette when va see him? -ed.), demands crowd participation and he knows how to get it. He spent most of their set on the floor arranging different activities. We arrived to witness every single person at the show holding hands in one big circle, with the circle running clock-wise. Even the guys who were "too cool" were convinced to join in. Then there was what looked like some sort of Native American ritual, this time with everyone crouching down, again in a circle, with the singer in the middle and everyone jumping high into the air when prompted. The music was perfect for it, too. Very cool, unique set.

The SHORT FUSES were pretty sloppy, but I like that. I remember their guitar player was right on. THROWRAG was alright—I don't know if I get all the hype. The IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS are just incredible. Chet is great and it was cool talking to him in the bathroom about the old Cicero's in STL. Now at this point, after 14 bands, I was ready for a short break, cheaper beers, and just a place to sit down. I figured Hank was in the car but he wasn't. "Oh well," I said, "let's check out the Huntridge Tavern up the street." It turns out that Hank and a whole shitload of other rock 'n rollers did as well. It was pretty funny—this small, local, sports-oriented strip-mall bar was overrun that whole weekend by all manner of out-of-town

freaks. But it was obvious that everyone was getting along just fine. It was also cool to see that part of Vegas that most tourists don't get to see, although it was really just like my own North County stomping grounds. So first I spot Hank, who is sitting with my good friends from Dallas, the MULLENS!! How cool. I went straight to the bar for a pitcher, whiskey & Coke and a bunch of shots. Everyone was thoroughly enjoying themselves and it felt great to sit down in a padded booth. After an hour, we figured we were missing a bunch, so back to the show. SUPERSNAZZ was finishing (I guess we'd missed RED PLANET, '68 COMEBACK, and the DRAGONS) with the FLESHTONES up next. Decent show but terrible sound (the whole weekend was plagued by what could have been better sound.) Then, one of the highlights, DMZ—the real rock 'n roll. The HUMPERS kept it going for an hour of no-holdsbarred, ass-shakin' rock 'n roll. At 2:00am the INVISIBLE MEN came on, but most of the crowd had split and missed an insane set.

Afterwards Dave & I were missing most of our friends but found Hank passed out in the car. We knocked on the window and Hank came to, looked at us like he really had just seen a ghost and said, "Where are we??" Dave thought this was absolutely hysterical and fell to his knees laughing, which got me laughing. Here we are in the still of the night in a parking lot on the edge of the desert with the full moon shining down upon us; no wonder Hank didn't know where we were. A good end to a good day; it was time to get some shut-eye.

We awoke Sunday morning around 10:00 to find Hank in rare form. Apparently he'd gotten up early and wanted to take advantage of the pool, ("I paid for it!") which he did while enjoying guite a few beers. We all decided on one of the better buffets, the "champagne brunch" at the Sahara, and Hank was very entertaining during the car ride there. Stopped at a light on one of the main intersections of the Strip, we see hordes of tourists (mostly senior citizens) slowly negotiating the crosswalk. I glance over and Hank's got his head out the window and he's shouting at them, "Hey, has anyone seen a fiddler on a hot tin roof?!", which cracked us all up. Then, in the parking garage, after we'd nearly run over a pedestrian he leans out and slurs, "Sorry... God bless America." We needed to keep an eye on him. The buffet was really good, though, and not just the food and complimentary champagne, but watching Hank finish SIX plates of food. And while most of us had two or three glasses of champagne, he had EIGHT glasses stacked in front of him, before he grabbed one for each hand on the way out. So the rest of us had a lot of catching up to do.

First though, a few of us wanted to see the Hoover Dam. It might not be for everyone, but I find its story extremely

fascinating and have always wanted to see it. It is truly a wonder of architecture, but the story lies in the blood, sweat, and tears of the hundreds of men who spent over two years in 120 degree heat, with no shade, working 12-hour days, with the option of two days off per year. And of the 112 men who died on the job, the last to lose his life was the father of the first. Certain tours weren't available because the dam was a possible terrorist target, but we didn't have time anyway—it was time to get back to what Cheryl called "the fashion show."

Yes, Shakedown was something of a fashion show featuring a lot of leather, grease, piercings of all types, and probably more tattoos in this one building than in all of Vegas. I heard some folks criticize people for "overdoing it," but I enjoyed being surrounded all weekend by people with similar tastes and interests as me. And for the most part people were very friendly; I felt right at home.

Sunday started with the PEEPS, who were OK. I enjoyed the COME ONS, who had a real good groove, but didn't manage to get the crowd going very much (it was still pretty early.) SPEEDBUGGY was unique in that the singer played the only acoustic guitar I saw all weekend—I thought of Elvis and his band. The CHICKEN HAWKS were just the shit—kick-ass raw rock 'n roll, and Sioux City Pete is killer on slide. His wife Betsy on vocals completes a great rock 'n roll assault. The MULLENS followed suit with more of the real-deal revved-up rock 'n roll. Too bad their sound wasn't mixed very well. FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM were good but I needed another beer. Upon returning to the stage I saw a mesmerized crowd witnessing the most intense show of the weekend. The KING BROTHERS are known for their second-to-none explosive, wild abandon on stage, but for this particular number, the pace was very slow, with no real beat to it, sort of a trip to some nowhere land. Of course I couldn't understand the Japanese he was singing, but it appeared that it was something very deep that he sang about. Whatever the story, it was a strangely intense atmosphere and the entire crowd was glued to it, almost locked into some sort of silent trance. When I say "the entire crowd," I mean that the people milling around the lobby could sense that something special was happening onstage and they ventured in to check it out, until every person in attendance at the Shakedown was watching this spectacle. The KING BROS, had the crowd eating out of their hands. There was an abundance of good rock 'n roll to dance to this weekend, but the KING BROS. stole the show with their set. I think they out-did themselves, too-unfortunately their CD and video don't quite capture what I saw that day. (They're both good, though.) I found it funny later when they had changed out of their usual black suits & ties into regular street clothes and Ralph Carrera (one of the event promoters) led them to the BBQ spread out on the patio.

They piled BBQ, corn, baked beans, etc., onto their paper plates, sat down, dove into the feast and suddenly these 3 small Japanese mop-topped guys had BBQ sauce smeared all over themselves, corn-on-the-cob in one hand, Budweiser in the other. Welcome to the good of U.S. of A., boys.

The GAZA STRIPPERS sounded good, even after the act they had to follow. I really enjoyed ZEN GUERILLA, who did quite a few covers in their own twisted way, a few Black Sabbath if I remember correctly. Midnight on Sunday when Mick Collins' DIRTBOMBS started the crowd thinned a bit but the die-hards stood their ground. The DIRTBOMBS had a great groove going, playing quite a few songs from the excellent "Ultraglide in Black," but we couldn't bring ourselves to shake it much more. If, like us, you had been there to see the BRIEFS kick it off on Friday, you had stood through the better part of 32 bands. I say again, THIRTY-TWO bands. It's no wonder that the moment Mick Collins said, "Goodnight-thanks for coming" the crowd vanished almost instantly; that building was empty in about 2 minutes. We'd all had enough. That's not to say that all festivals are this exhausting—it's just that the Huntridge Theatre wasn't set up for it. Again, there were probably 20 chairs to go around all weekend. It was too much standing, which wasn't a problem at our beloved Gold Coast (the hell it wasn't! ed.). We learned that many people who had rooms at the New Frontier, the "host hotel" this year, grew tired of paying for shuttle rides back & forth all weekend and quite a few even got rooms at our own Econo Lodge. (To include JEFF "Mono Man" CONNOLLY, who Dave saw hanging out very drunk on the balcony at about 11:00 in the morning.)

Hank, Tim, and Steve hit the road home earlier. I don't know how Hank survived a 26-hour drive in the shape he was in from earlier that day. We ended up getting one hour of sleep in our motel room and an acquaintance of Dave's gave us a ride down the Strip to McCarran Airport. It was 5:00am so we got one last look at the lights of the Strip through blurry eyes. Vegas had taken its toll. The airport was an absolute nightmare because of increased security measures and we ran to the gate, getting there as the attendant was shutting the door, but we convinced her to let us on. It was difficult to sleep on the crowded flight home so it took us all day on Monday to recover, but for me it was well worth it.

So the moral of this story is: 1) If you haven't made it to a festival such as the Shakedown, Grind, Viva Las Vegas, Cavestomp (r.i.p.), Sleazefest, or even SXSW, you need to; 2) Let's all keep our fingers crossed that the Gold Coast hosts it next time; and 3) A good time is usually even more fun when Hank Caveman's involved.

THE END. SORRY NO PHOTOS!!! UGH.

## **SOME FANZINE REVIEWS**

#### **GARAGE AND BEAT! #3**

"Instro-Retro-Mondo-Retardo." Very similar to Scram in coverage and layout, this Los Angeles garage rock publication is edited and published by former Flipside writer P.Edwin Letcher. Yeah, some people just don't know when to call it quites, and that, by god, is a good goddamned thing! This 'zine, like many others reviewed here, is also getting much better with age, with this particular issue featuring interviews with Tim Livingston of Sundazed Music (simply thee most incredible reissue label in existence, and if you don't believe me, visit their web site at <a href="mailto:sundazed.com">sundazed.com</a> for proof!), The Insect Surfers, very well-written pieces on Ian Whitcomb, The Hollies, his excellent "Unifying Theory of the Universe" article in which he talks about records he's picked up recently, and then finishes it all up with scores of record reviews. Nothing ground-breaking in these pages and the layout leaves a lot to be desired, but some great writing, and really, when it boils down to it, that's what really matters. \$3.50 + postage to P. Edwin Letcher at 2754 Prewett St., L.A., CA 90031 -kopper

#### **HORIZONTAL ACTION #7**

First time I've seen this "adults only" 'zine and it's a fuckin' hoot! Lots of interviews with great bands like Andy G. & The Roller Kings, The Dirtbombs, The Mooney Suzuki, Les Sexareenos, and The Gizmos. Interview questions all basically center around sex and strip bars, in keeping with the sex, drugs & rock'n'roll appeal of the entire mag. Some of the interviews didn't flow as well as others, the best definitely being the one with Mick Collins & the Dirtbombs, which also appears to be the only one that was done in person, from what I can tell. Still, cover to cover this is a thoroughly entertaining, fun read. Great fucking record reviews section, articles on last year's Las Vegas Shakedown and Capital Punishment fests, plus strip clubs, adult film news, porno DVD reviews and lotsa nasty pics. Next issue (#8) promises a feature on pills (aphrodesiacs, of course!). In fact, I just read something on alt.music.banana-truffle about it: "Interviews with THE SPITS, BASEBALL FURIES, LOST SOUNDS, and DEADLY SNAKES. Along with a steamy spread with an Italian hottie that'll send you off into a jerkin' frenzy, and reviews of the sleaziest porn films and Real ROCKn' ROLL out there. So keep that zipper open, and your eyes peeled—It's time to get sloppy!!!" Heh heh heh...Can't wait! \$3 + postage to: 1433 N. Wicker Park, Suite 2, Chicago, IL 60622 (horizontalaction.com) –kopper

#### SCRAM #14

Very well done 'zine focusing on "unpopular culture" (popular unpopular subject these days, eh?) featuring an excerpt from Deniz Tek's upcoming book on his days in Radio Birdman, a very cool interview with Nikki Corvette (including a lo-fi centerfold spread), a great review of the work of author William W. Johnstone, The Go-Betweens, the motherfuckin' DICTATORS, a great article on lost amusement parks, a few other interesting pieces, and lots of very well-written record and book reviews. Only thing that didn't grab me was the sort of drab layout which could definitely use a shot in the arm, but content-wise I can't complain in the least. Nice full-color glossy cover, too. Highly recommended..\$5ppd in the U.S. to: P.O. Box 461626, Hollywood, CA 90046-1626 (scrammagazine.com) –kopper

#### UGLY THINGS #19 (Summer 2001)

The absolute ultimate rock'n'roll retrospective magazine that focuses not only on fantastic '60s garage and psychedelic rock'n'roll, but also on '70s punk and whatever else tickles their fancy. Reading fucking KILLER writing like this makes it a little easier to live without great deceased 'zines of the past like Kicks. Believe it or not, UT just keeps getting bigger and better with each subsequent issue. Issue #19, that came out this past summer, is definitely their biggest issue ever: 184 pages PACKED with some of the best rock'n'roll journalism you'll find anywhere. This one has features on Kim Fowley (by both Mike Stax and Karl Ikola of Trouser Press fame), P.J. Proby, as well as '70s legends Warsaw Pakt, The Boys, Chants R&B, The Churchills, The Straydogs, The Fuckin' Flyin' A-Heads, Don Craine & Downliners Sect, the obligatory "Pretties Page," and lots, nay, LOTS more, NOT to mention over 50 pages of record reviews! It's really quite refreshing to read a mag that's so perfectly put together, written laid out, and researched in this day and age of two-bit half-assed rock journalism. Kudos to Mike & Anja and the rest of the UT crew for consistently putting out such an extraordinary publication. Essential reading for any real rock'n'roll fan. 3707 Fifth Ave. #145, San Diego, CA 92103 (ugly-things.com) –kopper

## Two Pages of Surf/Instro Reviews by Doc

**AQUA VISTA** The Gentleman Racer (Dangermans Hideout) This is mighty tasty indeed. The trio from Derby, UK delivers a Hot Rod inspired, testosterone-pumping, full-throttled instro attack; like a nitro-fueled funny car driven by Satan through Palm Springs in July, this motherfucker burns from start to finish. And unlike many a new model Ford, there isn't a clunker on it. Even when the band does deviate from its breakneck speed – as on the song "The Model," which slows down a bit to display an almost bluesy, Latin vibe - they sound sharp and don't let up on the intensity. Agua Vista also manages to display a penchant for laying down odd guitar riffs and making quirky changes in the beat, which should be warmly received by folks who like a little more from their surf rather than the traditional 4/4 timing. My only complaint about the record is reserved for the actual production: the drummer's hi-hat sounds really shrill throughout it, and on the lone vocal track, "Ghost in the Passenger Seat," guitarist Rapido's voice is drowned out by cymbal wash. Still, it's only a minor gripe, because this one's a keeper. -Doc

THE FALCONS Rebel Jukebox (Falcon Beach Music) Lesson #1 as to why you should take liner notes with a grain of salt: the endorsement for this disc was provided by none other than The Ventures, who toured Japan along with this quartet a few years back. So, my hopes were high. I toss this one in my player, and maybe 5 bars into the first track, I'm thinking "Yuck." I give it another 30 seconds before I skip to the second track. My immediate reaction is "Double yuck." But to be fair, I listen for another minute or so. Then I skip to the 3rd song, and I'm saying out loud, "What the hell is this?" My wife, who's been subjected to this little experiment as well, picks up the case, scans through every nook and cranny in the booklet, and then mutters the 3 little words that have plagued many an act: "They're from Canada." Food for thought: from the nation that gave the world Rush, Triumph, Barenaked Ladies, The Outfield, Guy Lombardo, Celene Dion, Anne Murray, Shania Twain, Alanis Morissette, and Diana Fucking Kral, could it be that the only great band ever to come out of Canada was Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet? [What? You forgot Loverboy? -ed.] After hearing this CD, I'm convinced it's true. The Falcons play uninspiring, middle-of-the-road, traditional surf that fails to capture one's attention. It also suffers from a lack of focus: moods change right and left in the middle of songs, and there's not much continuity in the disc's overall sound. Avoid this one like you would a John Candy flick. -Doc

**V/A:** Better Than The Average Weekend (Deep Eddy Records) Let me give you the good news and not-so-good news on this tribute to Canada's now-defunct Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, one of the finest instrumental rock bands ever: half of the 22 songs are good, and half of them are not so good. Mind you, it's not that the bands play badly. It's just that 50% of the songs on the disc are almost indistinguishable from the original Shadowy Men versions, which defeats the general purpose of releasing a tribute album in the first place. The high points: The Heatscores

and The Dead Barons turn in rollicking, heavier takes of "Good Cop Bad Cop" and "Zombie Compromise," respectively, and The Neptones add a ska beat to "Harlem By The Sea." There's some pretty deft guitar work on the cover of "Hot Box Car" by Derf Zorr and Stella that sounds almost neo-classical, and an entire bass solo(!) comprises Bass Playin' Ben's version of "Jackpot." The low points: both Spy-Fi's "Reid's Situation" and Dirk Doom & the Overtime Orchestra's "Having an Average Weekend" (the immortal theme to the *Kids in the Hall* TV show) use either electronic drums or a fucking machine to supply the beat. Blasphemy! Electro drums don't have the depth or resonance to match the twang and reverb of surf guitars! In any case, since most of this disc sounds a lot like the original versions, do yourself a big favor and listen to those instead. **-Doc** 

The Supersonicos Irrupcion en el Cosmos (UrquizZonics) I was wondering when a surf band would get around to covering my favorite rock band of all time, the Pixies, who themselves were heavily influenced by surf. The Supersonicos—Montevideo, Uruguay's premier (and only?) surf/instro band—do a terrific vocal cover of the Pixies' "Alison" on this disc. (Ironically, their take on it plays a bit like the Pixies' slow crawl version of "Wave of Mutilation" that can be heard on the *Pump Up the Volume* soundtrack). But even if The Supersonicos hadn't scored major points with me by covering my favorite band, they would have blown me away with the other 18 songs on this release. There are so many highlights on this album that even the annoying snippets of B-movie dialogue (some of which is in Español) didn't bother me all that much. The quintet plays sharp, creative surf that sounds kind of psychedelic and abstract at times, due in part to some odd guitar tuning and timing. But the band always manages to rock, and sound like they're having a shit-load of fun in the process. Man, I'd love to see these guys get a hold of some visas and play here. -Doc

Los Straitjackets Encyclopedia of Sound (Fresh-Baked Music) This ambitious 22-song disc is so strange (in a good way), that I'm not entirely sure how to review it. Encyclopedia of Sound is actually comprised of six separate "sections" that cover a wide range of styles and influences. With the music ranging anywhere from rock to country to 60's garage to Tex-Mex to R&B and jazz, the quartet proves just how versatile instrumental bands can be when given half the chance. Section I (Rock N' Roll Rave Ups) includes the song "Road Rage," whose guitars sound like a hybrid of Link Wray and Chuck Berry. Section III (Psychedelic/Garage/ Sixties) contains "Golden Nugget." Its ending plays out like a tribute to the Van Morrison classic, "Gloria." "Onion Dip" from Section V (Blues/R&B) is the band's excellent take on the Booker T. and the MG's classic vamp "Green Onions," and displays some seriously groovin' guitar. But my favorite piece can be found in Section VI (Jazz/Easy Listening). "Take the 405," with its infectious 5/4 beat, is highly reminiscent of "Take Five," the Dave Brubeck Quartet cut from the late '50s that would go on to become one of the most famous jazz songs of all time. Admittedly, not all of this CD works—Sections II and VI (Country/ Twang and Tex-Mex) fall a little flat. And with each song averaging less than two minutes in length, it made me want more of the good stuff (the entire album—22 tracks and all—times out

at just 39:27). Straight up surf fans might feel alienated by the varying styles, but for those who dig all types of instrumental music, *Encyclopedia of Sound* just might be a little piece of heaven to you. **-Doc** 

Hal Blaine Deuces, "T's," Roadsters, and Drums (Sundazed) Sundazed reissues some of the best surf ever. This golden oldie from the '60s features one of the greatest drummers in rock that no one has ever heard of-the legendary Hal Blaine. Blaine, the quintessential LA session drummer, featured prominently on numerous "Wall of Sound" recordings produced by Phil Spector (prick), and on several Beach Boys' albums. (What? You thought they played all of their own shit? HA!) Unfortunately, Blaine is such a god at what he does that short of putting him in a lineup with other notable surfers of the time (Dick Dale, Bob Bogle, etc.), a surf session led by he alone was doomed to fail. On Deuces... he is surrounded by what appears to be a cast of thousands (including some very, very annoying horns) and is just not given a whole lot to do drumming wise. Oh, Blaine whips out some phenomenal chops here and there (especially on his rolls), but other than that, he's kind of laying low behind his overly produced band members. In Blaine's defense, he wasn't given enough decent material to work with, and with the incredibly dated overall sound of the album, this disc hasn't stood the test of time. He deserved a lot better. -Doc

The Wetsuits The Golden Tones of the Wetsuits (Wetsuit Music) The one comment I'd like to make about Australia's Wetsuits is that they play surf my dad would enjoy. And that's not a digexcept for his love of Neil Diamond, Pop's got some great taste in music, including surf. What my Dad doesn't like is the more modern, noisy, MOAM or Woggles-type stuff (more spit than polish, know what I mean?). The Wetsuits play really good traditional surf, with one or two minor surprises thrown into the mix. There's some soulful guitar on "Out of Limits," and they beat the old, dead Mancini horse "Shot in the Dark" nicely. But the songs are a little too short, and the organ (I use that term loosely) of Katrina Amiss sounds like it's coming from one of those cheap Casio keyboards you can buy at Target for \$39.95. It's used once for maximum effect, though—the band's cover of the Dr. Who theme is terrific, with the famous spacey organ/synth intro leading the way. Overall, it's a decent disc-not exactly my cup of Jack Daniels, but traditional surf fans will enjoy it. -Doc

The Avengers VI Real Cool Hits (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus) Real Cool Hits is a real cool reissue from Dionysus featuring The Avengers VI – one of the few things that have ever come out of Anaheim, California that have been any good (other than the corned beef from the Katella Deli and the old Angels ballcaps that had the silver halo around the crown). The band played from 1964–71, and seemed to have slipped under the radar of most surf fans. I have no idea why. There is some neat shit on this disc, most of it Ventures inspired but with better licks and with more humor. There's a good cover of the pop hit "Downtown" and "None But the Brave" has some tricky hi-hat and snare work that sounds like an early version of a Disco beat. "The Avengers Stomp" is a surf/bluegrass tune that's guaranteed to make anyone get up and, well, stomp. This is the kind of stuff I'd like to

see reissued more, from great bands that never seemed to get their due back in surf's golden era. **-Doc** 

The Lost Vegas Surf Psychedelica (Worldwide Ocean)
Hmmm... Can you smell what the Doc is cookin'? Let me share with you my recipe for Lost Vegas Stew:

3 parts Grateful Dead 1 part The Mermen A dash of Pink Floyd And 4 parts horseshit

This is the most languid, loitering garbage ever to be associated with surf music. It makes new age fuck George Winston look like a genius. After listening to this... Fuck it: you'd have more energy after taking two shots of Nyquil. The Vegas (that's plural for Vega, by the way, not Vegas as in "Las Vegas." Yeah, whatever...) pour out meandering songs with absolutely no vision that manage to be neither psychedelic nor surf. But they make up for it by writing really stupid lyrics. Would you like a small taste?

"Feel for reality.
Feel for what you think it is.
Feel for reality.
Watch as she walks away
... With someone else."

I swear to fucking God—I had to throw on *Are You Experienced?* after this just to renew my faith in man.

My wife wanted me to add her two cents: "This shit made me want to vomit." I couldn't have said it any better, honey. **-Doc** 



# Køpper Reviews "a Movie"

#### Quagmire in Holland (WorldWide Ocean/2000/51 minutes)

"Synopsis: A Psychedelic Adventure - Filmed entirely on location in Germany and Holland. *Quagmire In Holland* follows the journey of The International Cowboy (Rockabilly drummer Rex Xanders of Th' Flyin' Saucers) and Mr. X (Lost Vega guitarist Richard Kasper) as they search for enlightenment in Amsterdam. Also features an exceptional psychedelic soundtrack by The Lost Vegas. This film is available on VHS-HiFi at Amazon.com." (from <a href="https://www.undergroundfilm.com">www.undergroundfilm.com</a>)

"Filmed." That's a laugh. Shot on video, they mean. And for the "exceptional psychedelic soundtrack," see Doc's review of this band's disc. He pretty much nailed it. First four or five minutes of this movie is this guy laying on his hotel room bed flipping channels on the TV and making stupid faces. This must be "art"?

Here's a more accurate synopsis for ya: Some bug-eyed moron dressed up as a "rockabilly cowboy" and his doofus buddy drive for what seems like hours to Holland from Germany and meander aimlessly around Amsterdam (their clothing changes with each scene, too—good continuity!), walking up to people, shoving a microphone in their faces and asking them intelligent questions like "What'd they do with all the windmills?", "Where are the hash bars?", "Where all of the heavy metal bars?", "Where are all of the Harley Davidsons? (All I see are bicycles!)" and wondering where the "babe-age" is (amongst plenty of other stupid questions). Look, I'm a fan of the ridiculous and absurd when it'd done authentically (I give you World Wide Magazine as a perfect example), but this is just total crap. I felt dumber for just watching this. Makes you understand why most Europeans hate Americans. If "a psychedelic adventure" means getting out the video camera, shooting the highway as you drive from Germany to Holland ("filmed on location"—BIG FUCKIN' DEAL!), and then walking around Amsterdam asking ridiculous questions and acting like a coupla middle-aged, beer-bellied morons, then I'm glad I've never experienced one. (The guy finally ends up buying these stupid mushrooms packaged like fucking sushi from some ponytail dork at a drug boutique, saying "Cool!" the whole time, and then flushes 'em down the toilet at the end of the movie. Whatever.) If you really wanna see just how fuckin' bad this thing is, supposedly you can view it online at undergroundfilm.com if you're really looking for a quick way to knock your IQ down several points in one sitting. My advice: Don't waste your time. Watch literally ANYTHING else instead.

Speaking of movies... along with some great music, they provided some welcome escape from the horrible events of Sept. 11th. Here are my lists:

**BEST MOVIES OF 2001:** Ghost World(!!), Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Amélie, The Man Who Wasn't There, A Beautiful Mind, The Royal Tenenbaums, Donnie Darko, Sexy Beast, Zoolander, and Mulholland Drive (my Top 10, not necessarily in that order).

**BEST DOCUMENTARIES:** Plaster Caster, Fidel, Porn Star: The Legend of Ron Jeremy, SPIT: Squeegee Punks in Traffic, Stealing Home: The Case of Contemporary Cuban Baseball, American Mullet, and Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures (again, not necessarily in that order).

THE WORST: The Fast and the Furious (puke!) and Moulin Rouge! I couldn't even finish it!

Bob always says "the worst movies are the BEST movies," but in this case, the worst movies ARE the WORST MOVIES!! Sorry, Bob!

#### BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Here's an old HEAD IN A MILK BOTTLE interview with '80s St. Louis punk greats **DUCK DUCK GOOSE** that was printed in Maximum Rock'n'Roll #55! WOW!!



(The following interview with Duck Duck Goose was compiled for Head in a Milk Bottle, a St. Louis-based music magazine. The Interview was administered in late September, 1987, after an arduous band rehersal). Duck Duck Goose is: Keith Brawley - bass guitar, Matt Lauber - electric guitar , Joe Moomey - lead vocals , Larry Morrisey - drums and vocals

MRR: I notice each of you seem to be quite exhausted. Are you guys always this intense at your rehearsals?

Joe: No, not always, but I think we had a few too many nacho cornnuts beforehand.

Keith: No, but really, this was pretty much an average Duck Duck Goose practice.
Larry: Yeah, you have to discipline yourself if you

expect to get anywhere, especially in this line of work.

Joe: Yo, man, not from my side of the tracks... (laughter)

MRR: How are you handling your sudden rise in

Matt: Aw, man, it's not like everywhere I walk I'm swamped by autograph seekers. Only once in Minneapolis by this partially-stupid girl who was working at K-Mart.

Larry: We invited her to our show that night but she declined and insisted we buy a camera they don't make film for anymore.

Joe: Yeah, we're not as bad as LL Cool J, but we have watermelons on our shoulders

MRR: So, tell us about Unjust Cause and the famous "Descendents Incident.

Keith: It all started back in the Autumn of '85. We were young and restless so we began a punk rock outfit and named it Uniust Cause

Larry: But initially, the band consisted of me, Joe and Johnson-Burger. I played drums while Joe sang and attempted to play bass. Johnson thought he

Keith: After opening a show with Agression I was re-cruited and Joe relin-quished his bass responsibili-

ties to my young hands. Joe: Mark was an inexperienced mosh-guitarist. He was strictly an anti-solo

moshin' homesteader. We quickly extinguished Burger's presence and replaced him with a half-step higher

homechild Joe: He kind of reminded

me of Crispin Clover with the aroma of stale cigarettes. Larry: But we saw the light one night at the infamous Contra Death benefit show. Matt: Contra Death was my band at that time. We and Unjust Cause were the newkids on the punk-rock block. My band, was led by Dave "king anarchy" Carr. Everybody hated him because he was against fun. This made him quite amus-

Keith: But through the steam shooting out of Dave's ears.

we heard the sound of an Eddie Van Halen guitar. Joe: Then we looked, and we saw that it was an Eddie Van Halen guitar.

Matt: Yeah, I have to admit, there were a few stripes on my black and red Kramer guitar.

Larry: It was soooo obvious because of this that he would inevitably replace the previous half-baked homesteaders

MRR: So, what about this "Descendents Incident" that had \$t. Louis up in the air?

Larry: Well, people used to complain that our music was too happy sounding. We were to open for the Descendents and Beefeater late last summer. It was going to be our farewell concert, so we decided that we should go out with a bang.

Keith: We had brainstormed for weeks before the show and came up with an idea to end all ideas. Matt: What we ended up doing was playing a five minute deathrock song. Joe wore this skeleton head and I was wearing an executioner's mask The crowd seemed to enjoy it, and started to worship us after I smashed an old guitar onto the

Joe: People were climbing onstage just to grab a piece of the broken guitar. Then people suddenly tried to grab me as if they were worshipping me. Larry: But behind our masks we had the biggest grins on our faces.

Keith: Suddenly the stage lightened up and others Joined us on stage as we broke into "Wild-eyed Girl" by Rod Stewart, the happiest song known to man. Matt: We proceeded to nearly destroy Turner's Hall and everyone in it. Some local black youths were hired to drench the fans with waterpistol fire. Suddenly we launched our attack on crowd. We threw marshmellows, popsicles, superballs, whiffle balls, popcorn, styrofoam, toilet paper rolls, and what

Joe: Candy, oh, yeah, a cowbell. And don't forget, we had a trampoline.

Keith: There were about ten people with big hats

joining in. Matt: All the mikes and lightbulbs were crushed

Joe: The stage was covered in water and mud because af ew of the kids who decided to fight back ran outside and returned with handfuls of dirt and rocks

Larry: We had to run for our lives afterwards. Then we went into hibernation for the winter

MRR: What do you guys listen to when your not

playing your own music? Keith: I listen to...

Joe: Keith, nobody listens to you anyway. (Keith leaves room in sarcastic anger) Larry: Spike Jones, the Meat Puppets, and anything

my brother listens to.

Matt: Anything with big guitars, like B. B. King, Killing Joke, George Thorogood, the Cult, you name it. Besides that, I listen to nothing but New Age. My favorite New Age artists include Jean Michel-Jarre, Marc Johnson, and most of the Windham Hill re cordings.

Joe: Dude, I like the good stuff, like Soul Asylum, R.E.M., the Flaming Lips, and, of course Madonna. If you don't believe me, you're too dumb to be smart.

(Keith returns)

Keith: What question are you guys on now? Larry: The same one as before

Keith: Oh, then put me down for... All: We don't care!

(laughter abounds)

You have a new cassette out.

Matt: Yes, but we prefer to call it a cartridge that doesn't contain a lyric pamphlet.

(Larry's brother enters room and disrupts interview for a few minutes)

Larry: It's 21 minutes of non-stop fun for only two

Joe: At the studio, we had a new wave expert engineer and mix for us, because we didn't want some heavy metal hoosier

trying to turn us into the next Lynard Skynard.

Larry: Considering the time and money put into the prothe tape, duction of pretty well produced. It's got eight songs including one very familiar cover sona

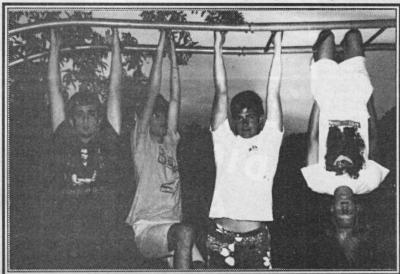
Matt: We called it People

House Keith: It gives one the feeling of one big people house. All: Yeah

MRR: Thank You for this Interview, guys. Before we end do any of you have any last comments or words?

(No one paid attention to this final question as Larry's brother entered and began insisting the band play only Sugar Hill Gang songs. The band began arguing over who gets to be Big Bank

DUCK DUCK GOOSE c/o Leaping Lizards 1816 Rhea/ St. Louis, MO 63138





## DED BUGS "PLANET OF BLOOD" OUT NOW!!



"Gleefully punk-rocking...mixing Ramones-style riffage and B-movie humor with just a pinch of Beach Boys sweetness, the Bugs have concocted a high-fructose confection that's heavy on hooks and short on mopey, grunge-rock attitude."
--Joe Williams, St. Louis Post-Dispatch's "Get Out"

Poppy fun punk rock about monster movies and silly stuff. Not unlike the Groovie Ghoulies, but not sounding much like them at all. Produced by that clever Mass Giorgini, this is a fun-filled jolly good time. Nothing terribly original, but a whole lot of fun and catchy as hell. Just when I give up on pop punk, bands like this make me remember why I loved it in the first place. Hats off to you guys.

- Maximum Rocknroll

What makes this band so good at what they do is that they take their undeniably RAMONES-esque sound and infuse it with their own personalities. Their sense of humor and their odd quirks shine through the punchy rock and roll with ease. It is impossible to listen to this CD and not get sucked into the bopping good times.

- Jeb Branin, In Music We Trust

Arguably the band's best . . . fueled by a love of pop culture and energized by loud, fast rock'n'roll, the band is putting together a sound that's equal parts smarmy, one-eyebrow-wrinkled humor and classic pop, run through a time machine into 1979. Mixing the occasional metal rave-up with a sing-along chorus, the band's expert at piecing together their influences, while maintaining an original take on life. Maintaining the

ability to keep "Spiderman" cartoons at the center of your art's not something everyone can do. Luckily, the Ded Bugs can.

- Thomas Crone, The Common Space

"Are Ded Bugs the most underrated rock band in St. Louis? Maybe, on the basis of the sugar-sweet bouncy punk they churn out on sugar-coated SNOT POPS for kids!"

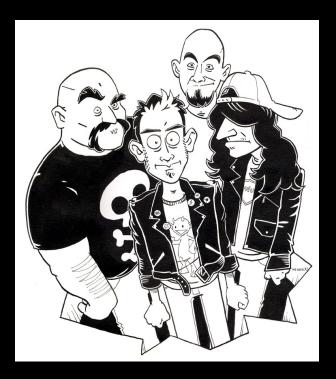
--Randall Roberts, The Riverfront Times

Ded Bugs won a Slammy last year for Best Punk Band, and it's easy to understand why after a spin of Planet Of Blood, their fourth full-length. The Bugs' winning goofy pop/punk isn't breaking any new ground, of course, but it never fails to charm and amuse, with zippy, handclap-peppered songs about dead girlfriends and zombies named Bob.

- Rene Spencer Saller, The Riverfront Times

From the haunted hills of the small railroad town, DeSoto, MO (pop. 5,993) come punk-popsters, Ded Bugs! While in high school, Ded Bugs met through a mutual friend, a starving artist named Rick Lowrey. Rick even had a VW Bug to get the gang together—a nifty foreshadow. What was there to do in DeSoto? Nothing! So the gang kept themselves occupied with comics, cartoons, and rocking to the radio. Eventually they discovered they each had a Ramones record (probably the only four Ramones records in DeSoto!), and before long they were getting together on Saturday nights to watch B-movies, drink IBC root beer, and rock out. Soon they were four-tracking and even writing hum-friendly songs of their own! From these humble beginnings come Matt Bug, Jeff Devulheyd, D.A.V.E., and Menace the Dennis, aka Ded Bugs—the same band that is currently tearing up the planet with their hyper-hooky cartoon-crash rock'n'roll!





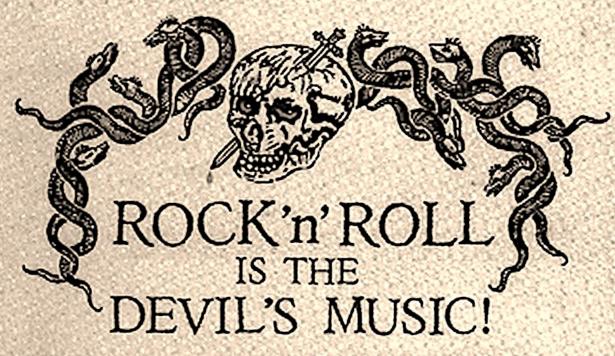


STL2000: A year in St. Louis underground rock (2001)

"A slice of St. Louis punk rock is preserved in all of its gritty, muffled, poorly lit glory . . . the film, which clocks in just shy of two hours, lovingly documents a year in the underground."

-- Rene Spencer Saller, The Riverfront Times

Visit dedbugs.com/stl2000 for more info! [2021 Update: It's also on YouTube!]



## BEWARE

the hypnotic voodoo rhythm, a reckless dance down the Devil's road of sin and self-destruction, leading youth to eternal damnation in the fiery depths of hell!

